

CULT MOVIES **& Video**

VIDEOSONIC ARTS #4

\$4.95

“The Monsters Are After Our Women!”



The Terrors Of

TOR JOHNSON

Special By Conrad Brooks!



Godzilla Scrapbook



TED BROOKS

EDWARD D. WOOD JR.

CONRAD BROOKS



Greetings, old friends!

Welcome back for another excursion into the realm of fun, frightful, fascinating, film fantasies. You liked our Ed Wood issue so much, we're uncovering a bit more of that particular realm of movieland.

Tor Johnson is officially a star of Ed Wood's *Bride Of The Monster*, having been billed immediately after Bela Lugosi on the screen and theatrical poster credits. Tor is also in such cult favorites as *Beast Of Yucca Flats* (currently a home video favorite), and the ever-popular *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. There are Tor Johnson masks, models, toys and several comic book titles, but so far, little is known about Tor himself. With this issue's filmography and exclusive interview with his frequent co-star Conrad Brooks, we will shed some light on this unique and intriguing screen giant.

But there's much more than Tor! Langdon, Kong, Little Angelo, and cult favorites galore.

We will be covering many wonderful subjects in the months ahead, and showing more of those posters and photos you love to look at. You'll find a great variety of material on Cult Movies you've loved, and some you've never heard of.

But what exactly is a Cult Movie? I haven't a definition to spare on that question. Like the Supreme Court trying to define pornography, I may know it when I see it, but I can't tell you what it is.

In the area of theology, people may refer to someone else's religion (very rarely their own) as a cult. This usually has a somewhat shameful connotation.

In the world of movies, a cult status may be a secure foundation worth aspiring to; an emblem of recognition. "Wow, Ed Wood has achieved a real cult status!" This is true.

It's also true of Elvis, Bette Davis, Seka, John Waters, *Star Trek*, and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. In 1968 it was emphatically true of W. C. Fields, but not so much today. But how they come about, why they last one summer or 30 years, when the cult status is actually recognized, bestowed, and by whom — these are subjects not so readily classified.

All we can do is keep writing about these wonderful, funderful films, and let the movies speak for themselves. If you've got a favorite film you'd like to see covered in a future issue of *Cult Movies & Video*, write and let us know!

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy the latest issue. To start doing that, just turn the page!

Sincerely,
Mike Copner
Editor

PAWN OF A MAD MONSTER

Ravishing
beauty
transformed
into
raging
beast...
loving
to kill!

JUNGLE CAPTIVE

with **OTTO KRUGER**

Amelita Ward Phil Brown

Jerome Cowan

and **VICKY LANE**
as the Ape Woman

RONDO HATTON
as Moloch, the Brute



Screenplay by M. Coates Webster and Dwight V. Babcock
Directed by HAROLD YOUNG A UNIVERSAL PICTURE
Original Story by Dwight V. Babcock
Associate Producer, MORGAN B. COX

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Videosonic Arts

Buddy Barnett
Publisher

Michael Copner
Editor-in-Chief

William T. Barnett
Graphic Design

Marta Dobrovitz
Research Editor

**This issue dedicated
to Forrest J. Ackerman.**

Contributing Writers:
Edward G. Barnett
Kristen Blankenship
Conrad Brooks
Burton Helms
Rudy Minger
John Norris
Bruce Robinson

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(Hollywood Movie Posters)
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Felipe Telhiz (Cinema Collectors)
Chris, Brandon & Tanya Ortiz
Marilyn McGraham
Tom & Betty Harrop
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Frank Dobrovitz & Fannie Puente
Johnny, Mary, Jeanette, Doodle,
Rosemary, Debbie & David Barnett

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The Noteworthy and The Not Worthy

Conrad Brooks, our favorite actor and writer, co-star of nearly one hundred baaaad movies (*Plan 9, Darkman, Polish Vampire In Burbank, Beast Of Yucca Flats, Puppetmaster III*, to name just a few), recently played a small but colorful part of a Transylvanian villager in the new Francis Coppola version of *Dracula*. "We stood around in full make-up waiting for a trained wolf to jump through a window," says Conrad of his hard day on the job. "The wolf was supposed to be the vampire. The entire cast and crew stood around all day, but they couldn't get the wolf to jump through the window." Nevertheless, we're looking forward to seeing this latest incarnation of Count Dracula.

Several magazines have carried stories about the Madalio Films version of Lon Chaney's *Phantom Of The Opera*, and the accompanying musical score by **Korla Pandit**. Much speculation has been done, but the true facts have never been told until now.

Early in the planning stages of the live event, *Cult Movies*' own Michael Copner was contacted to help stage and publicize the presentation. The result was the screening of Lon Chaney's 1925 classic, a beautiful 35mm print provided by George Eastman House Film Archives in New York. This is the most comprehensive version of the movie known to exist and includes the early technicolor footage restored by UCLA Film Archives. *The Phantom* was shown at the Orpheum Theatre in downtown Los Angeles, a theatre that had cost over two million dollars to construct back in 1926, and had long been the crowning jewel of the Orpheum vaudeville circuit. Much cleaning and restoration was done to the theatre before this landmark event actually came to pass.

The most exciting part of the package was the idea that the entire film would be accompanied on the gigantic and majestic theatre pipe organ by none other than Korla Pandit, recording and television star of international acclaim. Pandit gave the first all-musical broadcast on west coast television (KTLA-TV, 1948) and went on to do over 900 live broadcasts and two filmed series for worldwide syndication. In all of these broadcasts Pandit never spoke a word verbally, but communicated entirely through what he terms "The Universal Language of Music."

Korla has given many live concerts in the United States, Canada, and the Near East, but had never before added the credit of "silent movie accompanist" to his list of credits. However, when the box-office opened on show night at the Orpheum, nearly 3,000 people were in attendance to hear Mr. Pandit's new age score for Chaney's classic film — doubtlessly still the greatest of the many filmings of *Phantom Of The Opera*.

Pandit was magnificent. His original accompaniment was dynamic, intricate and totally unique. Many celebrities who were in attendance — ranging from Forry Ackerman

to child film star Gloria Jean — waited in line to greet Pandit at the program's conclusion to thank him for his marvelous musical gift of the evening. Perhaps the most special of the special celebrities was none other than Mary Philbin herself, the actress who rips the mask from Chaney's grotesque face in the famed "Dungeon Unmasking Scene" of *Phantom*. After the presentation, Miss Philbin told Korla, "Even though I'm in the film, I never cared much for it until tonight. You brought it to life for me with your music."

In short, the program was sensational. However, what followed was less than sensational. Technicians from Madalio Video took music from that performance of *Phantom*, and a second performance of it given by Korla at another theatre in Santa Barbara, California. The intention was to use these music tracks in a home-video presentation of *The Phantom*. It's worth noting that this was fairly well under way before Pandit himself was made aware of it, not to mention before he had given approval for his performance to be recorded and sold. If this puts the recording in the classification of a bootleg, having been made without the artist's knowledge or consent, we cannot say. Whatever the result would have been, a comedy of errors followed that will probably prevent anyone from hearing what actually went on at those two performances.

Madalio technicians were somehow unable to sync the Pandit score with their videotape copy of *The Phantom*. They began re-cutting the audiotape to rearrange portions of the music. The chief engineer actually suggested that Korla had played the film out of sync. By this time, Pandit had become enthused enough with the idea of marketing his score of *Phantom* that he offered to record the entire show again on the synthesizer, placing the tracks directly on a copy of the videotape, so that there would never again be any way to accuse him of playing out of sync — impossible though such a feat may be!

With the assistance of Korla's two sons John and Shari, both sound technicians and musical artists in their own right, this is exactly what was done. The finished product was different from what one would have heard on the pipe organ and with live audience response in the background, but it was still something any fan would have been delighted to hear. But again some tampering began. Perhaps the musical tracks were removed, and an attempt was made to overdub pre-recorded laughs, groans, applause, and other audience sounds to pretend that this was an authentic live performance. When the tampering concluded, the musical track was again out of sync with the action on the screen and the music itself — originally comprised of rich, vibrant orchestral tones — was reduced to a flat shadow of its former self, sounding as though it had been recorded inside a tin can.

Although some respected critics seemed

to give Pandit's work top reviews, most of the critics, not knowing about the confused circumstances and having never heard the actual live performances, took the maestro to task for not knowing what HE was doing!!! The finished product is not a decent representation of Pandit's talents or of the potential that still exists for a definitive *Phantom* videotape for the fans. "I've been thinking of doing the show one more time," Korla has speculated, "And putting the video out myself, just to assure that it gets done correctly. I think there would be a good response from the fans of this film if they could hear what we actually did with it before the people got in there and tampered with it. I could do another recording, or get those tapes of the Orpheum performance. I'd like the people to hear that."

It would indeed be a joy to present the meeting of these two legends, PANDIT meets *The Phantom*, in its full glory. In the meantime, we felt we should try and set the record straight.

We were delighted to see **Fred Gwynne** in the new comedy, *My Cousin Vinny*, in which Fred plays a court judge with a good old Southern drawl. Though billed fifth from the top, Gwynne is the performer who makes the greatest impression, and is absolutely wonderful from start to finish. More major parts for this talented actor are in order.

Though she's had many careers in her exciting life, **Traci Lords** will always be known for the first job she took in the entertainment industry. Let's face it — she's as typecast as Lugosi. Never mind that she claims she was on drugs during the entire 150 videos and can't remember what she was doing. And never mind that she now states it was not her in those videos after all, merely a Traci impersonator who talks and acts just like she does. That matters not one bit. She's Traci Lords, the erstwhile harlot starlette.

Recently she set aside her new career as a Kult Kween and star of such genre films as *Naughty Of This Earth*, to launch still another career, that of newspaper journalist. *The Los Angeles Times* ran her article entitled, "Beauty in Films Is Not Always A Pretty Picture" — a concept that would have done Ed Wood proud.

At one point in the exposition, Traci declares: "Beauty is a strange thing. The more famous a person becomes in this celebrity-driven world, the more beautiful he or she seems to be. It's just amazing what a magazine cover will do for your sex appeal. Because she's rich, famous and funny, Roseanne Arnold is probably dream girl to a lot more men than if she were still a Utah housewife shopping at K-Mart."

Now that's a big hard mouthful — coming straight at you from the mind-hole of a truly celebrity driven beauty. Or a drugged impersonator who writes just like her.

A lot of television shows have fans, but only one has fans listed by name in the Oxford English Dictionary. "Trekkies," those never-say-die devotees of the *Star Trek* TV series and films, are now immortalized in Volume 18, page 475 of the reference book, confirming their standing as the most loyal fans in entertainment history. Just how

dedicated are they?

In 1968, Trekkies sent a million letters to NBC, urging the network to spare their favorite show from cancellation. In 1976, 400,000 of them wrote NASA, demanding that the first U. S. space shuttle be named "Enterprise." And for the past 20 years, in cities from Bangkok to Boston, Trekkies have flocked to conventions to celebrate the show whose enduring appeal has spawned six feature films, a new television series, and a virtual galaxy of merchandising items.

Estimates of the Trekkie population range from the one million hard-core fans who regularly attend conventions and subscribe to the 500 Star Trek publications, to the tens of millions who watch *Star Trek: The Next Generation* every week and line up for the feature films. Of the Trekkies, William Shatner says, "These people know more about me than my own family does. They know more about *Star Trek* than I ever will."

Star Trek's fans include some of the world's most prominent public figures. Yet it's really the ordinary viewers, in the United States and in over 40 countries, who have sent *Star Trek* into the popularity stratosphere. They've made the original series the most successful show in syndication history, and turned *The Next Generation* into one of TV's biggest hits, earning Emmy Awards and the coveted Peabody Award for programming excellence along the way. And thanks to fans, the six *Star Trek* motion pictures have earned over \$600 million in box office grosses and video

rentals.

What makes *Star Trek* so special? Perhaps James "Scotty" Doohan puts it best when he says, "We didn't even dream what it was going to turn into. But all I can say, even though I can't explain it, is that *Star Trek* has some kind of magic."

We are rapidly picking up some new advertisers, with products directly relating to the world of Cult Movies. We'd like to introduce you to some of the most exceptional ones.

Young producer and director of exploitation & horror films, **Dave DeCoteau** (*Nightmare Sisters*, *Ghoul School*, etc.) has gotten into video distribution in a big way as Cinema Home Video. In this issue he's advertising dozens of cult titles — his own and everybody else's — at probably the lowest prices ever. Check it out!

Then there's Mike Vraney at **Something Weird Video**. We knew Vraney in Oregon and Washington when he was promoting rock concerts and film conventions. Now he's the self-proclaimed "curator and conservator of the nation's consummate collection of eclectic exploitation videotapes." At this very moment he's in the process of putting out 40 first-time-on-video releases of great, though obscure, nudie-exploiters of the 1950's and 60's. All are transferred directly from original 35mm prints and come in color boxes. Some of the titles are: *Spacething* (1968), a way-out Sci-Fi nudie

about Captain Mother "a sadistic lesbian" and her crew mates on a journey into deep space; *Sweet Sickness* (1966), a sick little nudie-ruffie about underground filmmaking in Los Angeles; and *Moonlighting Wives* (1964), an expose' of prostitutes in suburban New York, directed by Joe Sarno. An interesting sidelight is the ad itself. The *Something Weird* ad which you will find in this issue has been banned by *Filmfax* magazine! The artwork was by Dave Stevens (*Rocketeer* creator), with ad copy written by producer, director, distributor Dave Friedman. The two Daves! Either of these men would have charged thousands of dollars for their services under any other circumstances, but donated their talents to create the new advertisement for *Something Weird*, because they like the idea of making these rare films available to the home viewing audience. However, their combined efforts were deemed to be sexist by the powers-that-be at *Filmfax*, who refused to run the ad. We must declare that we are honored to present it to you here. Look for it, read it, and respond accordingly.

If you collect model figure kits, you may know that **Lunar Models of Texas** has some of the most sensational works available on the market today. We've seen examples of their renditions from *The Fly*, and Vincent from *Beauty and the Beast*, and thought them to be breathtaking! Lunar Models has nearly 20 spectacular limited edition kits

(continued on page 64)

Letters

Dear Cult Movies,

I've read your magazine cover to cover. The satire on *The Giant Claw* was hilarious. Just when I'd thought I'd laughed myself sick and couldn't laugh anymore, I read your "Psychic Connection Between Elvis and Lugosi" by Prometheus Arden, Hollywood Psychic. I was rolling around on the floor in hysterical laughter. It's beautiful! Keep it up!

Glenn Johnson,
Chicago, IL

Dear Mike,

Thanks so much for the copy of #3. Wonderful. Totally Wonderful. I'll see that you get #12 of *Little Shoppe Of Horrors*. Talk about the past — I remember an article by you in an old issue of Greg Shoemaker's *Japanese Fantasy Film Journal*. Lot of years back!

Best,
Dick Klemensen

(Praise from such a one as Dick Klemensen is to be treasured. This dedicated gentleman speaks from a position of accomplishment, being the publisher of one of the most spectacular genre magazines in America. See our review section for more info on this splendid publication, *Little Shoppe Of Horrors*.)

Dear Folks,

Cult Movies is my choice of the best new magazines out. It helps to have writers who know what's going on. I just can't emphasize how great your magazine is.

Chris Amaroux,
Syn Magazine

Dear Mr. Copner,

I had my introduction to your publication at FANEX 5 when I purchased Issue No. 3 which I greatly enjoyed. I would very much like to have a copy each of #'s 1 and 2, particularly the Bela Lugosi issue, #1. By the way, if you ever decide to print the missing caption for the photograph on page 59 of Issue 3, it is Bela Lugosi with me on the set of the film *Mother Riley Meets The Vampire* which was released in the USA as *Vampire Over London* and *My Son The Vampire*.

With Best Regards,
Yours Sincerely,
Richard Gordon
Gordon Films, New York

Dear Cult Movies,

Last issue was good, especially your Ed Wood and Bela Lugosi coverage. But I don't like reading the stuff about censorship. That was the problem with the main monster magazines in the past. Cal Beck used to fill *Castle Of Frankenstein* with stuff about Vietnam, and Forry Ackerman used to unload tons of jokes and puns in *Famous Monsters*. If I cared about that sort of thing I'd be reading *Newsweek* or *Mad Magazine*.

Sincerely,
Jim Sutton,
Orlando, FL

(*Newsweek* and *Mad Magazine* — two great sister publications! Unfortunately, censorship is something we will all be forced to confront more and more in the next year. Some of the distributors and stores who carry this magazine have come under siege

in recent years for stocking certain comic books, records, and even bubblegum cards. If a watchful eye and close check isn't kept on Big Brother, many of the freedoms and Constitutional guarantees you think you have will soon be gone. We'll know the party's over when our essays on censorship get censored.)

Greetings,

Congratulations on *Cult Movies*. This info packed book sure did have something for everyone! In my case, *The Giant Claw* made my day. The exclusive photos of La Kakonia were a real scoop! Hope for more, soon!

Best,
Kurt Luedtke
Milwaukee, WI

Dear Mr. Barnett,

I really enjoyed issue #3 of your very entertaining magazine. I was particularly pleased to see so much space devoted to the fascinating Ed Wood, Jr. and to Conrad Brooks. I like the tone and respectful attitude of your magazine. You are not condescending, like so many other publications are. And your magazine also has a fabulous editorial sense of humor. I look forward to more.

Sincerely,
Ron Ford
Sylmar, CA

Letters should be sent to:

Videosonic Arts
11225 Magnolia Blvd.
suite 200
N. Hollywood, CA 91601

For The Love Of Pressbooks

A NEW DIMENSION IN

SUSPENSE
Laughter!

You will be hysterical at the goings on in
this madcap frenzied diabolical film.



with UGO TOGNAZZI • RAIMONDO VIANELLO
EDY VESSEL • MONIQUE JUST • Directed by STENO
FLORA FILMS • RELEASED BY ELLIS FILMS

THEATRE

In 1962 Flora-Variety Films of Italy produced an odd little send-up of current British and American thrillers, especially Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. The film was called *PsycoSissimo*, and was an original blend of comedy and suspense, somewhat evocative of the early Pink Panther films. It was picked up by Ellis Distributors in New York and shown in Italian with English subtitles. It did good business in America's art houses and garnered some acceptable reviews.

The *New York Daily News* said: "*PsycoSissimo* plays a big joke on the chillers. Borrowing such appurtenances as a skeleton, cemetery, hangman's noose, dissecting torso, sleeping potion, hacksaw and walking ghost and an assortment of potential killers as stuffing, the Italian movie adds a sausage grinder to the conventional props and zestfully manufactures a roistering spoof. The film verges on slapstick, a medium not usually employed by the Italians. *PsycoSissimo* warrants more of its kind."

The plot concerns Arturo, a wealthy middle-aged Peeping Tom who wants to murder his unfaithful wife. He witnesses two out-of-work filmmakers rehearsing the death scene of a beautiful young woman. Arturo, unfortunately, believes he has witnessed an actual murder and eagerly approaches the two with the job offer of murdering his wife. In need of money, the two men accept the offer, plotting to fake the crime and collect the money.

However, the wife has other plans — such as murdering her husband for his money. The two "killers," always in the wrong place at the wrong time, find themselves being chased by the police, two real murderers, and the greatest menace of them all, Arturo's furious wife who suspects her husband's plan and is out to murder everyone in the movie!

The grand finale comes in a sausage factory where the equipment is set in motion, the better to dispose of the heroes.

PsycoSissimo, 88 minutes, 1962.
Cast: Ugo Tognazzi, Raimondo Vianello, Edy Vessel, Monique Just, Spiros Focas, Francesco Mule, Franca Marzi. Credits: Directed by Steno, Story by Iva Battelli, Adapted for the screen by Vittorio Metz and Roberto Gianviti, Produced by Leo Cevenini and Vittorio Martino, Music composed by Carlo Rustichelli. ■

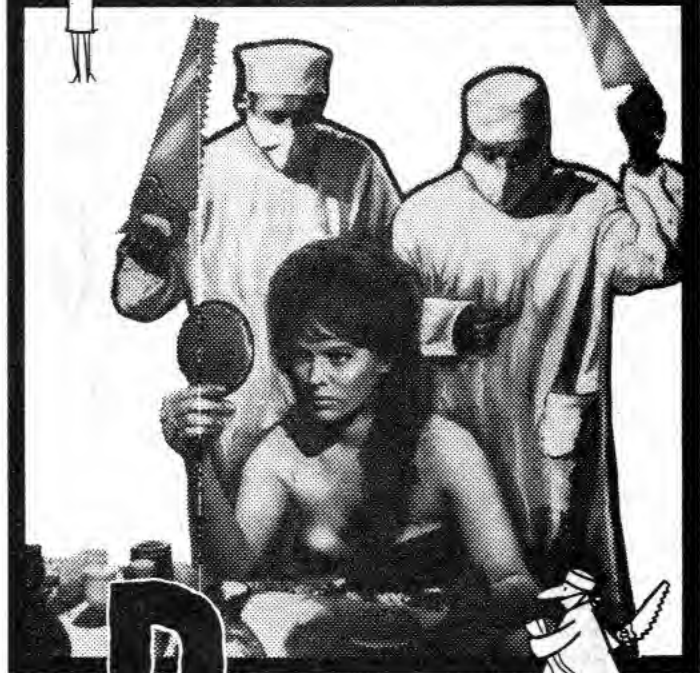
A NEW DIMENSION
IN SUSPENSE
AND
LAUGHTER!
PSYCOSSISSIMO



..Edy Vessel



'A rambunctious piece of nonsense!' NEW YORKER
'A roistering spoof! It plays a big joke
on chillers.' DOROTHY MASTERS, DAILY NEWS 'Lively Humor!' ARCHER & WINSTEN, ROLL **Mad**
Italian farce, good nonsense! ALTON COOK, WORLD-TELEGRAM & SUN



Don't
try to
pronounce
it.
SEE
IT!

PSYCOSSISSIMO
THE HILARIOUS LAUGH-A-SECOND SPOOF OF PSYCHO!

UGO TOGNAZZI - RAIMONDO VIANELLO - EDY VESSEL - MONIQUE JUST
FLORA FILMS - Directed by STEN - RELEASED BY ELLIS FILMS

Bar All The Doors! We're Being Invaded! Worst Of All. . .

by Bruce Robinson

"Nation obsessed by visions of flying saucers and monsters from Mars!!!"

Movie theatres across the country today displayed colorful and exciting posters heralding the coming of Hollywood's latest filmic trend: Visitors from outer space arriving in flying saucers. The posters in question are to publicize *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, tale of a celestial visitor and his robot arriving in the nation's capital to deliver a message to the whole world. The nature of the message? Haven't seen the picture yet, but judging by the poster art, it can't be good!!! One poster shows a big and nasty hand closing crushingly around a hapless Earth. On another poster we see the giant robot Gort as he stands towering over a city with a gorgeous blonde in his arms, helpless soldiers milling about his ironclad ankles like ants.

Get the message, friends?

If the Commies don't get us, these marauding aliens from outer space will, and they aren't just interested in conquering or destroying the world, either. Them scumbuckets want our women-folk!!!!

To young people growing up in the 50's, struggling to get by under the relentless shadows of McCarthyism and the dire Atomic Bomb, movies like *The*



Horror Of Party Beach

Day The Earth Stood Still were heady stuff. You could literally hear a pin drop in your crowded theatre as Gort hovered over Patricia Neal, his visor rising to reveal that deadly glowing "instant bye bye" inside the helmet as the youngsters hollered, "SAY THE WORDS!!!"

"Klaatu Barada Nikto!" she responded.

There was no blonde in Gort's arms. Just Patricia Neal, thankfully.

And Gort, while he was one mean muggawhumpas, did not quite tower over cities.

He was, in fact, something of a hero to young folk in those times, as was his human partner Klaatu.

My dad refused to see *The Day The Earth Stood Still* when it first opened.

The Monsters Are After Our Women!!!



Shall we dance?

As he put it, the movie was a piece of junk, "Another one of those damn pictures full of monsters and noisy spaceships and all that." Almost a month later, he came home from work talking about wanting to see this really good movie a friend on the job had told him about, something called *The Day The Earth Stood Still*. I said, "Forget it, Pop, it's just another one of those junk

movies full of monsters and noisy spaceships and all that."

He just said "Oh" and that was the end of that.

Years later, *The Day The Earth Stood Still* had its television premiere on a Saturday night and my dad was flaked out on his favorite sofa shouting "Say the words, you dummy!" as Gort made ready to deliver the Galactic Zapper to

Patricia Neal.

The movie we're discussing opened in theatres in 1951. The advertising used to promote it attracted a lot of people and repelled others who just couldn't see it for what it was. After that, word of mouth and good reviews did the job of making the movie a hit.

That same year another of these so-called "science fiction melodramas" made the scene with a markedly different advertising approach. Entitled *The Thing From Another World*, the one-sheet for the movie was nothing but the title in thorny blood-red lettering over a green background. Other posters showed various castmembers in tense poses although there was nothing to give away the true nature of *The Thing*, and there was certainly nothing depicting heroine Margaret Sheridan being eaten or seduced by or carried off in the "arms" of the title creeper.

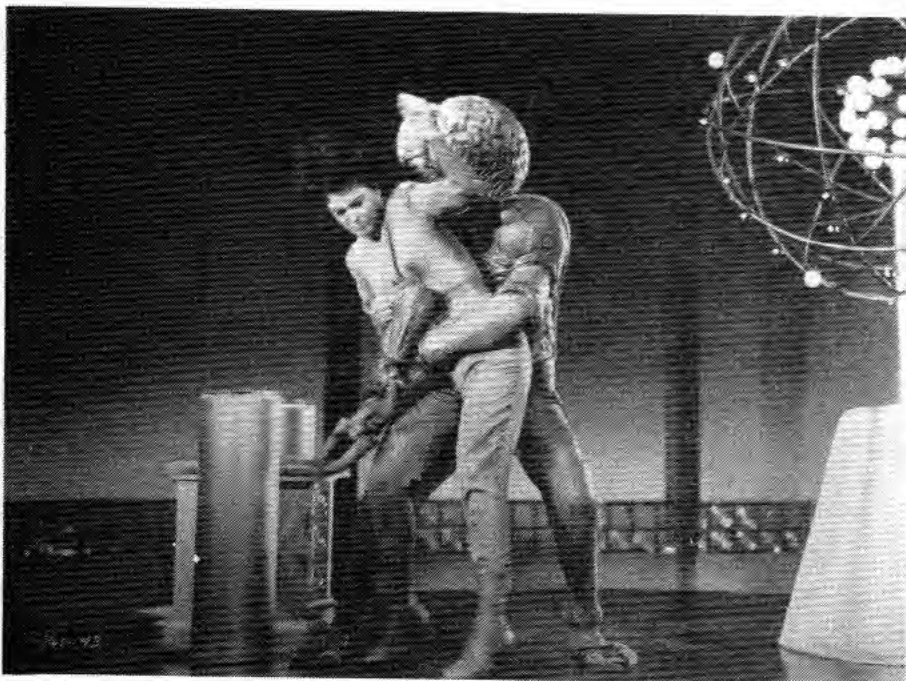
In the original screenplay for the film, the monster breaks out of the greenhouse in the movie's classic scare scene and grabs Sheridan's character by the hair, dragging her off to what can only be a nasty fate before she's rescued. Producer Howard Hawks and director Christian Nyby saw the fantastic foolery that lay behind such planning. In the film as it was shot, the alien never takes any more or less interest in Margaret Sheridan than he does the males in the cast.

To a plantman that reproduces itself at will, using blood to nourish its seeds, the girl in the movie is nothing more than another source of chow.

Worked for me, guys!

In the year of 1953, posters depicting a hulking Martian mutant carrying luscious Helena Carter in its simian arms announced the coming of Twentieth Century Fox's color thriller, *Invaders From Mars*. The promotional art exaggerated the movie's content only slightly, occasionally showing us one "towering" mutant with Helena in its arms, otherwise it was reasonably truthful from a conceptual viewpoint. Strangely enough, while the poster art managed to show the public exactly what the Martians looked like, it didn't give away much of the plot. It did,

continued



Faith Domergue wrestles with the mutant that only has (bug) eyes for her from *This Island Earth*.

however, fail to show us them zippers on the Martian mutant suits! Adults who usually scorned these types of flicks came away liking this one because (A) it was in color; (B) it turned out to be a dream in the mind of a likable but overactive kid obsessed with outer space and "MUTANTS!" or (C) they couldn't see the zippers!

As Marvin the Martian would say, "You have made me very angry, very angry indeed!"

And the Martians proved it that same year in George Pal's spectacle, *The War Of The Worlds*. In the movie's less-than-inspired original one-sheet poster, we see an incredibly oversized Martian arm and hand (three fingers with suction-cup tips) reaching down out of space for the tiny (and no-doubt unhappy) forms of stars Gene Barry and Ann Robinson.

In the movie as photographed, Barry and Robinson are hiding inside a trashed farmhouse when a curious Martian sneaks into the dump to check out this great-looking Earth babe. In one of sf cinema's more interesting scare scenes, the diminutive (read that to mean "short") Martian sneaks up behind Ann Robinson and reaches out to tentatively pluck her shoulder with its little three-fingered hand. Just as tentatively, she turns around and lets out the time-honored gasp of pure fright so that Gene Barry can yank her out of the Martian's unimposing grasp.

And what does Barry do next? Does he smile and say "Hi there, nice of you to drop in, can I offer you a drink while we bat the breeze?" No way! Gene Barry doesn't socialize with no crummy Mar-

tians! First, he blinds it with a flashlight beam. Then he belts it in the kisser with an axe, "strictly in the name of cordial interplanetary relations, you understand," sending it howling into the night.

Way to go, Gene!

Well, anyway, Ann Robinson's honor was not compromised by any two-bit Martian, but you almost get the feeling the Martians stomped the hell out of Los Angeles just trying to get their suction cups into Gene Barry's haughty and scientifically heroic hide.

Also in 1953, movie theatres displayed huge posters whose artwork depicted a giant, nasty, alien "eye" streaking out of space over a desolate landscape while a group of tiny humans ran from it in terror.

Pretty awe-inspiring stuff to an Earthbound young Space Patroller of the 50's, gang!

The movie this artwork publicized was called *It Came From Outer Space* and it was Universal-International's first entry into the Three Dimension market, hopefully the source of mucho filthy lucre for the studio. The mother of my friend Mike Snavely saw the movie at the local theatre. She neither understood nor gave a hoot about the 3-D tsmmes, thinking the glasses were some sort of dumb giveaway, so she tossed them and enjoyed the movie just fine without them. And this gal was a real movie buff back in the days when it wasn't considered trendy and all the rage to be a real movie buff. She could watch any fifth rate "B" movie and name every face on the screen.

So much for 3-D.

When Jack Arnold was hired to direct *It Came From Outer Space*, producer William Alland told him the studio wanted to see "monsters, Monsters, MONSTERS" when the picture was finally unleashed.

So Arnold obliged them with what was truly the screen's first real BEM (Big-Eyed Monster), a gnarly Xenomorph which turned out to be better and probably hipper than anyone on the planet, with the possible exception of far-seeing hero Richard Carlson.

Carlson's comely co-star, Barbara Rush, was directed to scream her bloody head off at every possible opportunity, and (God Help Us) she did just that! In one such scene, she and Carlson are out in the desert at night and he's playing a flashlight beam about the landscape very slowly. Suddenly, the beam comes to rest on a Joshua tree.

No big deal, right?

Wrong! Rush lets out a scream calculated to raise the Pharaohs from their subterranean tombs. If I were Carlson, right about then I'd have belted the dizzy dame in the chops!

Later on, she's safe at home when she hears a knock at the door. Opening the door, she finds herself confronted by a small neighborhood boy wearing a toy space helmet and zapping her with a toy blaster.

Scream? You bet! She lets out the longest earsplitter you ever heard and you wonder how her poor throat can take all this abuse. And the kid? He just stands there calmly and delivers his message. He should have kicked her in the kneecaps and split!

In spite of (or maybe because of) these histrionics, *It Came From Outer Space* made lots of bread and was an inspiration to latter-day wunderkinds like Steven Spielberg.



Mara Corday

In 1954, Universal-International released the second of its 3-D thrillers, *Creature From The Black Lagoon*, again starring Richard Carlson with a gorgeous female thespian named Julie Adams, and again directed by Jack Arnold. Arnold now brought the "Monster and the Girl" mystique to its apex: LUST! (No, how could they?!?!?) The movie's monster, an underwater denizen known as the Gill Man, has an obvious "affection" for Julie Adams as she swims above him in the water.

Does this bother us? NAAHH! Hey, it was delivered in a skillful and intelligent manner, and anyway, Julie Adams had some boffo legs! And her scream? Hoo boy! When the Gill Man grabs her and leaps into the water with her near the end of the movie, she lets out the longest and most raggedly frenzied tonsil-flapper we've ever heard. What red-blooded American lad wouldn't rush to her rescue?

During a recent theatrical revival of *Creature From The Black Lagoon*, one theatre paid the movie what might be the ultimate accolade when it dyed its popcorn green and labeled it CreatureCorn. Gimme a break!

In 1955, Universal released two films which are fondly looked upon by today's fantasy film enthusiasts. Each movie contains its own special pick for the award designated "Most Ludicrous MONSTER & THE GIRL Sequence Ever Conceived!" Perchance I exaggerate, but not by very damned much.

The first of these movies, *This Island Earth*, was shot in Technicolor and (in retrospect) has sometimes been described as the *Star Wars* of 1955. And hey, it deserves this reputation, except for one thing: This goggle-eyed bigheaded monstrosity known as the Metaluna Mutant. Visually, it was kind of an interesting critter which almost survives as one of the cinematic myths of its day. Conceptually, it was a flake!

When co-stars Rex Reason and Faith Domergue first encounter this beastie on the planet Metaluna, the movie's real star and chief Metalunatic Jeff Morrow describes it thusly: "It's similar to some of the insect life on your own planet. Larger, of course, and with a higher degree of intelligence..."

"Har de Har!" goes the audience.

In the second film, *Tarantula* — another one helmed by Jack Arnold — biochemist Leo G. Carroll concocts an artificial nutrient which, when injected into the title character, causes it to grow to the size of Disneyland (Well, almost!) Just past the halfway mark in the movie, the giant spider (having devoured most of the cattle, horses and humans in the countryside) trundles back to the desert mansion in which it began its nefarious career.



Bud Westmore poses (above) in his laboratory with the head of the mutant from *This Island Earth*, the Technicolor sf thriller starring Jeff Morrow, Faith Domergue and Rex Reason.

Westmore (left) pretends to put the finishing touches on the same creation, even though he had little or nothing to do with its design.

It's a dark night and leading lady Mara Corday is seated in her upstairs bedroom in the mansion, writing a letter to somebody in the "normal" world. She's wearing white pajamas which make her look sexily clean and quiescent. Outside, the monster tarantula strides up to tower over the house, probably wondering how he ever managed to fit inside that mother. We're back in Corday's bedroom as the beastie's silly-looking mock-up of a "face" peeks through the window. Sighting Corday, the zooms closer until one giant eyeball almost makes contact with the window's glass. Hot damn! Check out those Jammies, Spidey! How'd you like to feather the old nest with that luscious morsel of femininity, boy?

More to the point, watcha gonna do with her if you do get ahold of her, aside from gobbling her up like you've gobbled up every other living thing you've stumbled across!

Excited to the point of frenzy by Mara Corday, Spidey straddles the house and begins to shimmy, bringing the mansion down around the ears of Leo G. Carroll, who gets gobbled up like most everything else in the film while Mara Corday runs frantically into the night to be rescued by hero John Agar. The local sheriff (Nestor Paiva) takes one look at Spidey coming over the hill



and exclaims "Jumpin' Jupiter!"

Another awe-struck witness exclaims "Holy Cow!"

Critics of the time weren't quite so vociferous.

Getting back to *This Island Earth*: In the first of the movie's two climactic sequences, the aforementioned Metaluna Mutant has smuggled itself aboard the spaceship as Jeff Morrow flies Rex Reason and Faith Domergue back home to Earth. It's necessary for all three to spend some time inside the "conversion" tubes undergoing some kind of pressurizing thingamabob, one of those sessions calculated to leave a guy feeling "like a new toothbrush" (sung to the tune of "Like a Rolling Stone"). In one of the movie's weaker

(continued on page)

Godzilla Scrapbook

The original *Godzilla*. Dark, moody, haunting, and unsettling. Most certainly the kind of film that should never be colorized!

It is interesting how we now tend to give *Godzilla* high marks and a landmark status. In days gone by, *Godzilla* was dismissed by critics and given the lowest marks available on most film checklists. The first edition of the "TV Key Movie Guide" gave it a one-star rating and passed it off as unsuitable for any kind of audience. Even Robert Bloch singled out the film for contempt, feeling that *Godzilla* could thrill no one, save for the model builders who designed the miniature cities for the rubber suit monster to destroy. "One death is a tragedy, a million are statistics."

Today the film is given higher marks and the monster is given his due. Now, nearly 40 years after the original *Godzilla* first hit the screen, it is recognized as having been the genesis of a tremendous cycle of science-fiction/monster films of the 1950's and 60's, even though that cycle may not be highly regarded by many.

But *Godzilla*, the monster himself, represents an archetypal principal and the film can be seen as a kind of exorcism, an elaborate ritual every bit as meaningful to an atomic age as Bloch's preferred "suggested horror" was to an earlier age. There's nothing very subtle about a giant, radioactive lizard ripping a city to smithereens, just as there was nothing very subtle about America bombing Japan into unconditional surrender during World War II.

As has been mentioned many times, *Godzilla* can be seen as an allegorical stand in for the United States of America. On August 6, 1944 the first atomic bomb to be used in warfare was dropped on Hiroshima. On August 9 America dropped a larger atom bomb on Nagasaki. Ten years later, *Godzilla* arose from the sea and hit the screen. Nearly 10 million Japanese citizens went to see this film. When they saw this indestructible monster ripping their cities to shreds and killing their people with radioactivity, were they thinking of the United States?

It is interesting to observe how the Japanese have been fascinated with the idea of giantism and destruction in their films since that time, be it giant lizards, giant moths, or giant humans. They even took our Universal Frankenstein and turned him into a giant! They have assimilated what C. G. Jung has called "the archetypal images" of the unconscious and turned them into a part of their own national entertainment. In the book "Man and His Symbols", which was conceived and edited by Dr. Jung, there is a photograph from *Godzilla*, showing the monster tearing down an electric power station. The caption beneath reads: "Perhaps the monsters of modern horror films are distorted versions of archetypes that will no longer be repressed."

In psychoanalysis and dream symbology, to envision a giant is a promise of future success; killing a giant signifies an increase in material wealth; to see a giant trampling over others or pushing them asunder indicates obstacles which one can overcome through perseverance. Is it a mere coincidence that the Japanese have risen from the ashes of destruction and seemed to overtake the United States economically, slowly assimilating the giant that had threatened to overtake them?

While this may not be the place to put *Godzilla* on the psychoanalyst's couch, we do

feel that this powerful imagery does give one more to think about, and has a far greater meaning reaching deep emotional roots, than to dismiss the whole genre as something strictly for the kids.

Having thusly tried to defend ourselves, we must confess. Everyone at *Cult Movies & Videos* is absolutely crazy — about *Godzilla* movies. Not only *Godzilla*, but the entire line of giant monsters from Toho Studios of Japan, and some of the creations of other studios as well. Insane as it may seem to some, we are absolutely enthralled by the sight of Japanese men in rubber monster outfits, stomping plastic buildings to shreds. *Godzilla*, Rodan, Mothra, and the hydra-headed King Ghidra, along with all the supporting cast monsters have become as family. They've stomped, flapped, and slithered their way into a kind of immortal and mythical dreamland wherein the transparently artificial is eagerly accepted as absolutely real. The Toho Mythos.

What follows is a checklist of the *Godzilla* series. Even though no one studio was ever responsible for releasing these films in America — or perhaps because of this — nearly all the *Godzilla* films are available for home video sale. Therefore, anyone who so desires may quite likely rent or purchase the entire series, to study and enjoy time after time!

1. *Godzilla — King Of The Monsters*, 1954, released in the US in 1956. The beginning of it all, the debut of our star monster, created by the immortal trinity: director Ishiro Honda, special effects supervisor Eiji Tsuburaya, and musical director Akira Ifukube. Nearly 10 million people saw the film in Japan, before *Godzilla* went on to world wide box office success. The late Joe Levine is said to have bought American screen rights for a mere \$50,000, then went on to make over half a million dollars on the property after adding new scenes and an English language narration with Raymond Burr. *Godzilla's* American premiere was more of a test marketing in some 300 theatres in the New England States. After that, an impressive ad campaign was designed and the film opened nation wide to depressing reviews, but tremendous profits. When Vestron Video picked up *Godzilla* for a home video release in 1983, *Cue Magazine* called it, "a veritable hair-raiser".

2. *Godzilla Raids Again*, 1955, released in the U. S. as *Gigantis The Fire Monster* in 1959. Just as *Son Of Kong* was rushed into production in 1933 to cash in immediately on the success of *King Kong* earlier that year, so Toho Studios hurried a sequel through the production mill to follow up on the financial return on *Godzilla*. Direction was given to Moyotoshi Oda, and music was by Masaru Sato; the miniature effects were again handled by Mr. Tsuburaya and his crew. The film is a good sequel to the original *Godzilla*, and the first monster vs. monster film that seemed to set the trend for the rest of *Godzilla's* days. Warner Brothers released the film in the United States, changing the title and the name of the monster to *Gigantis*. In the film he battles Angilas, a monster that looks unfortunately just like what it is: a guy crawling around on all fours. Otherwise the effects are good, though not as evocative of the terror and moodiness of the first film. When Video Treasures released this one to the home market in 1987 they returned the original title, *Godzilla Raids Again*, though

they kept the original American soundtrack, so our hero is referred to as *Gigantis* throughout.

3. *King Kong Vs. Godzilla*, 1962. The third film in the series was obviously planned as a major epic, at least on Toho terms. It was the first to be shot in color and wide screen. It returned director Honda and music composer Ifukube to their helms, but unfortunately was treated as a comedy, rather than a tale of dark terror. Great though Eiji Tsuburaya's work is, it seems that his effects people were not quite adept at filming their monsters in color — a problem that was solved by the time of their next film in this series. The creatures and miniature settings do not look as convincingly real as they did in earlier (as well as later) films, and this spoils a bit of the fun.

Universal-International released the film in America, and chose not to spend more money in buying Toho's original music. Instead they had their Musical Supervisor, Peter Zinner (who was also credited as Editorial Supervisor) go through Universal's own library of music, pulling out themes from the *Creature From The Black Lagoon* series, tunes from old Doris Day films, and even a few bars of Hans Salter's music heard in the Universal classics, *Night Monster*, *Frankenstein Meets The Wolfman*, etc. Peter Zinner has since served as film editor on major releases, such as the recent *Gladiators*. This may still be the *Godzilla* film seen by more people than any other in the series. Over 11 million people in Japan alone flocked to it's premiere. *King Kong Vs. Godzilla* was released to the home market in 1987 by Goodtimes Video, and is one of the best selling videotapes in the series.

4. *Godzilla Vs. The Thing*, 1962. This is perhaps the greatest entry in the entire series. There is a grace and beauty about the film that was not found in the others. The awe-inspiring power of *Godzilla*, totally and convincingly displayed in Tsuburaya's effects work, is the counterpoint to the intimate charm of the twin girls from Infant Island and their magical powers over the dying Mothra.

After Mothra dies while attempting to destroy the rampaging *Godzilla*, two smaller larvae are hatched from Mothra's giant egg. They are induced by chants and prayers sung by the twin faeries to finish the work of the perished parent. The egg hatching scene is one of splendor and wonderment. Though the mark may have just slightly been missed by the miniature effects, the day is saved and the scene is brought overpoweringly to life by the emotional musical accompaniment of Akira Ifukube; it's sweeping harp and string harmonies so filled with dynamic emotion. We feel as a privileged witness to a monumental event, and a mystical secret seldom revealed.

The very nature of *Godzilla* has often lent to these films a tone of warning, perhaps carried to extremes of social commentary in *Godzilla Vs. The Smog Monster*. Other films in the batch have various ominous predictions relating to science, political corruption and nuclear warfare. But in *Godzilla Vs. The Thing* we find the most straight-forward and eerie proclamation of this type. When a group visits the island of Mothra to seek help from the natives, they discover a bleak and barren island, and engage in the following exchange as they walk through the bleak terrain:

(continued)

**NOTHING
LIKE THIS
EVER ON
THE SCREEN!**

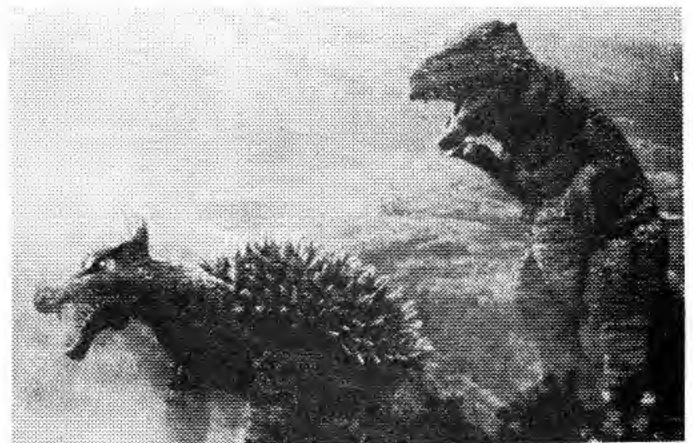
SEE the war of the GIANTS!

SEE the BIRTH of the world's most terrifying monster!

SEE armies of the world destroyed by "THE THING"

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL presents in **COLORSCOPE**

GODZILLA vs. THE THING



Atomic Monster Rises From Sea To Terrify World in 'Godzilla'

Star-Narrator

An unusual and different type of horror epic, the most realistic film of its type ever made, arrives next.....at theTheatre. It is "Godzilla, King of the Monsters," and according to all reports the title is no exaggeration.

A Trans-World release starring Raymond Burr, the new science-fiction thriller was filmed entirely in Japan, with photography and special effects so outstanding as to dwarf completely such imaginative hair-raisers as "The Thing," "The Creature" and "King Kong."

Burr, who will be remembered for his fine performance as the killer in "Rear Window," plays an American newspaper correspondent in Tokyo when the prehistoric monster Godzilla comes back to life, breathing atomic fire. Godzilla, who measures thirty stories high, was revitalized by H-Bomb explosions and proves impervious to every means of destruction known to man. When he rises from the sea and goes on a rampage into Tokyo, crushing and burning as he goes, every viewer will get more than his money's worth in thrills and goose-pimples.

Also in the cast of "Godzilla, King of the Monsters" is the willowy, almond-eyed beauty Momoko Kuchi, whose romance with a naval officer has a direct bearing on the monster's eventual destruction.

King-Size Horror Rises From Sea in 'Godzilla'

King-size horror comes to town beginning next.....when theTheatre presents "Godzilla, King of the Monsters," newest and most spectacular of the science-fiction thrillers.

Filmed entirely on location in Japan, the Trans-World release stars Raymond Burr in the role of an American newspaper correspondent in Tokyo. Burr will be remembered for his portrayal of the killer in "Rear Window" and of the district attorney in "A Place in the Sun."

The unchallenged star of the show, however, is Godzilla himself, an horrendous, 30-story-high beast who was supposed to have roamed the earth millions of years ago. According to legend, he had been lying buried at the bottom of the sea of Japan. But recent H-Bomb experiments re-activate his mighty frame, his body soaking up radiation like a sponge, making him capable of releasing death-dealing, searing vapor whenever he chooses to breathe on anything or anybody. In the picture he destroys an entire city before science paves the way for his eventual destruction.

'Godzilla' Opens Here

"Godzilla, King of the Monsters," newest and biggest of the science-fiction spectacles, arrives next.....at theTheatre.

It tells the spine-tingling, hair-raising story of Godzilla, who, according to a Japanese legend, is a prehistoric monster standing 400 feet tall. For ages the beast has lain dead on the ocean floor, but H-Bomb experiments re-activate him and he comes to horrendous life breathing atomic death to all who cross his path. All efforts to annihilate him come to naught and in a frenzy of retaliation he attacks Tokyo, destroying the city and posing a menace to all civilization.

Raymond Burr, recently seen as the killer in "Rear Window," is the star performer as well as narrator of the story. "Godzilla, King of the Monsters" is a Trans-World Release filmed in Japan.



"GODZILLA" MAT 1A

Raymond Burr, who played the killer in "Rear Window," will be seen as a reporter in "Godzilla, King of Monsters," science-fiction thriller due.....at theTheatre.

Terror Hits New High On Screen in 'Godzilla'

Spectacle, horror and suspense combine to give film fans the thrill of their lives when "Godzilla, King of the Monsters," arrives next.....at theTheatre. The new science-fiction pulse-pounder is said to make such hair-raisers as "The Creature," "The Thing" and "King Kong" seem like "Peter Pan" by comparison.

Raymond Burr, who will be remembered for his fine performance as the heavy in "Rear Window," will be seen in the role of an American newspaper correspondent who happens to be in Tokyo when Godzilla, fabled monster of the deep, returns to life. Recent hydrogen bomb experiments in the vicinity of Japan have re-charged his vitality and have once again made him into a living force for destruction.

His presence off the coast is first made known when a number of cargo steamers and pleasure craft are unaccountably sunk in sudden blazes of searing flame. A few terrified survivors are picked up, and, before succumbing to strange burns and shock, these unfortunates are able to babble a few incoherent words about "the monster." When the Navy attempts to depth-bomb the monster into oblivion, he lumbers out of the water and into Tokyo, crushing railroads, buildings and everything in his path.

Before the monster is finally destroyed the 400-foot Godzilla creates more havoc and excitement than the screen has yet offered.

Science-Fiction Hit Stars Raymond Burr

Raymond Burr, whose many outstanding film roles include his portrayal of the killer in "Rear Window" and of the district attorney in "A Place in the Sun," has the unusual role of star and narrator in the newest science-fiction thriller, "Godzilla, King of the Monsters," which opens.....at theTheatre.

Filmed entirely in Japan, the Trans-World release has Burr playing an American newspaper correspondent in Tokyo, who happens to be on hand when the monster first makes its presence known. He stays to cover the story and nearly pays for it with his life.

Godzilla, according to an old Japanese legend, had been dead for over a million years, but recent H-Bomb experiments re-activate the great reptile. He first makes cinders out of an assortment of steamships and then decides to move in on Tokyo. Nothing can stop the 400-foot tall monster whose atomic breath blows destruction on everyone and everything in his path.

Scenes showing the mammoth trampling and burning of Tokyo and the awesome, breathtaking climax when Godzilla is finally liquidated, are among the most realistic and spine-tingling ever offered fans.

THE EERIE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ELVIS & GODZILLA

by Rudy Minger

1. Both Elvis and Godzilla came to fame in the 1950's.
2. Both destroyed a lot of property. Godzilla destroyed cities, while Elvis shot up television sets.
3. Both had considerable weight problems.
4. Godzilla was revived by atomic energy. Elvis was once billed as "The Nation's only atomic powered singer."
5. Both Godzilla and Elvis experienced career difficulties during the 1970's.
6. Both had an incredibly large number of product tie-ins, spin-offs, and other merchandising.
7. Neither Godzilla nor Elvis were classically trained actors. Both came to movies with no acting experience. Both made a large number of movies. Both were panned by the critics, and both were enormously popular none the less.
8. Godzilla sired one child, Godzilla Jr. — ? Elvis sired one child, Lisa Marie.
9. Both spent a lot of time in the water — Godzilla splashed around in the sea a lot, and Elvis made all those beach movies.
10. Both Godzilla and Elvis were and are noted for their astonishing vocal power.



SPECIAL EFFECTS PLUS TRICK PHOTOGRAPHY GIVE REALITY TO "GODZILLA VS. THE THING"

New dimensions of science fiction realism with resultant new peaks of thrills and new vistas of spectacle are achieved in American International's "Godzilla versus The Thing," opening at the Theatre.

The color and scope science fiction thriller features devastating effects through startling new Japanese techniques in trick photography. The new photographic effects feature four layer composite filming and large, motor-driven miniatures for greater realism.

For example, the miniature tanks, cars and other vehicles are more than three feet long and are motor driven, whereas previously such miniatures were maneuvered by invisible steel wires. The ships in the ocean sequences are up to thirty feet in length and they sail on a huge man-made lake that is stirred up for the typhoon sequence to look like a frightening maddened ocean.

The amazing human expressions on Godzilla's face is achieved by new ultra-slow motion photography, while hide of the monsters is made realistically frightening with plastic and foam rubber. Many models of the monsters, both Godzilla and the mysterious Thing, were used in the productions according to the size of the sets in use.

Add beautiful and realistic color and wide screen scope and the result is terrifying, exciting and realistic entertainment in American International's newest science fiction monster thriller, "Godzilla versus The Thing."



MONSTER DESTROYS POWER INSTALLATIONS — Gigantic Godzilla turns his atom fire breath upon a power plant in American International's "Godzilla versus The Thing." The color and scope science fiction thriller opens at the Theatre.
2 COL. SCENE MAT-2C

EPIC FIGHT OCCURS WHEN INDESTRUCTIBLE MONSTER BATTLES MYSTERY "THING" IN NEW COLOR-SCOPE FILM

Cities are shattered, armies are destroyed, air forces are rendered powerless when two of the most terrifying fictional monsters ever brought to the screen battle to the death in American International's "Godzilla versus The Thing."

The science fiction thriller, filmed in color and wide screen scope, opens at the Theatre. A cast of thousands works with the spectacular monsters whose battles and rampages achieve startling realism through amazing new special effects techniques.

Main action of "Godzilla versus The Thing" revolves about a power-

ful typhoon which resurrects prehistoric Godzilla. It also washes ashore a giant egg which eventually spawns a mysterious monster which challenges the heretofore indestructible Godzilla.

The resulting epic battle devastates large cities and panics thousands of people in a contest of proportions never before seen on the screen.

Sees 400-Ft. Beast on Rampage



"GODZILLA" MAT 2A

Raymond Burr, star and narrator of "Godzilla, King of Monsters," which comes.....to the.....Theatre, can't believe his eyes when he sees the prehistoric beast in death-dealing action. Thriller, filmed in Japan, offers breathtaking suspense and spectacle.

"It's so desolate! It's hard to believe it's inhabited."

"And this is the result of nuclear testing?"

"Yes. At one time this was a beautiful green island. As a scientist I feel partly responsible for this."

"All of mankind is responsible."

"This island is a good reason to end nuclear testing. Those who think of war should come and see this."

When in 1983 Paramount Home Video released this film to the home market — under the original Japanese title of *Godzilla Vs. Mothra* — they issued promotion calling it "...one of the greatest of all Godzilla films." They were right.

5. *Ghidorah, The Three Headed Monster*, 1964. This is the last great entry in the series. Even as such it is a step downward from the previous entry. Yet there is such a blend of science fiction, gangland activities, and mystery that the film does not bore one the way later sequels did. There is the international intrigue with the Princess Salno who becomes a prophetess who claims to be a Martian. Is she? The gangsters out to kill her aren't sure, she isn't sure, and we aren't sure until the end of the film. Then there's the suspense of the new monster Ghidorah, and the charm of the twin girls from Mothra's island. The film is filled with lots of stuff. *Godzilla*, *Rodan* and *Mothra* still look pretty good in this one. It's worth a look. Video

Treasures put it out on tape, at the slow speed, in 1988.

Godzilla Vs. Monster Zero, 1965. Nick Adams stars in this epic about aliens from Planet X

who steal our monsters *Godzilla* and *Rodan*, ostensibly to fight and kill *Monster Zero*, which turns out to be *Ghidorah* again. While not a terrible film, it certainly is not the best way to begin one's acquaintance with the series. Paramount Home Video released it to the home market and couldn't help but make fun of it on the back of the video box, calling attention to "effects so dated, so kitsch they couldn't call them special." You get the idea.

7. *Godzilla Vs. The Sea Monster*, 1966. This is the first big step downhill. It's like a different series, and in a way, it is. New music by Teruyoshi Nakano gives the film a completely different feel. *Godzilla* hardly shows up until half way through the boring story about a bank robber on an island. *Godzilla* does not look very convincing, although the Sea Monster in this one does look very impressive at times. It's easier, faster, cheaper to shoot *Godzilla* on an island, thus doing away with the need for intricate miniature sets of downtown Tokyo. If you want to watch it, Video Treasures put it out in 1987 — on a T-20 at the slow speed.

8. *Son Of Godzilla*, 1967. Temperature control experiments on an island cause a giant egg to hatch. Out comes *Godzilla's* son. When this film first came out, Forry Ackerman thought the little monster was cute and nick-named him *Tadzilla*. This is one of the worst films in the series. Video Treasures inflicted it on the home market in 1989.

9. *Destroy All Monsters*, 1968. In the future, all monsters will live peacefully on *Monster Island*. Until, that is, the *Kilaaks* come to earth and try to control them. This is one of the few *Godzilla's* that has not been issued on videotape in English, although Toho has it out on tape in the original Japanese version.

10. *Godzilla's Revenge*, 1969. Cut together from stock footage of previous *Godzilla* films, and strictly for the kids. This one was put out on video by Paramount.

11. *Godzilla Vs. The Smog Monster*, 1971. In some ways a step in the right direction, though still a far cry from the earlier, happier days. A politically correct *Godzilla* film, with pollution rising up as one giant monster for *Godzilla* to combat. American International put this one in the theatres in this country, and Orion Home Video got it in your home in 1989. You'll long remember the scene of the *Smog Monster* sauntering up to a belching smokestack, putting his mouth over top of it and taking a drag, to renew himself for his fight with Big G. The





"Save The Earth" theme music for the film served as inspiration for a later Yoko Ono song.

12. *Godzilla Vs. Gigan*, 1972. Also released as *Godzilla On Monster Island*. Aliens from Space-M have taken over Ghidra and Gigan, but Godzilla and Anguirus come from Monster Island to save the day. By this time Godzilla had become the kiddie's pal and a superhero for the Saturday Matinee market. By that time, Daiel International had been going great guns for many years with their own monster creation, Gamera the flying turtle. The giant turtle was a good monster who fought other bad monsters, such as Gaos the vampire superbat, and Zigra the flying shark. Toho wanted into the kiddies market, and supposed that their more famous Godzilla could be turned into a friend to all mankind without much imagination. And that's about how much imagination went into these things for the next few years. *Godzilla Vs. Gigan* was released on videotape in 1988 by New World Video, should you feel compelled to sit through it.

13. *Godzilla Vs. Megalon*, 1976. Earth faces destruction from under the sea as the underwater kingdom of Seetopia, fearful that mankind's nuclear weapons tests will destroy their civilization, decides to destroy surface-dwelling man. Their weapon is the insect-like horror, Megalon. As if this isn't enough, help from out of this world appears in the form of another horror, the monster Gigan. On the side of mankind is the mighty Godzilla and the invention of earth scientist, a robot named Jet Jaguar. This film is not widely seen here, but United American Video did put it out in 1986 on their \$9.95 label.

14. *Godzilla Vs. MechaGodzilla*, 1974. When this one first hit American shores it was called

Godzilla Vs. The Bionic Monster. One of the biggest hits on television at that time was bionic, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and the distributors wished to cash in on that success. Universal and MCA, producers and owners of the TV show, stepped in and quickly put an end to such exploitation; they are apparently powerful enough to convince a judge that they own the word bionic. It was released again in theatres by Downtown Distribution Company under the title, *Godzilla Vs. The Cosmic Monster*. In the film the foe is called MechaGodzilla. A monster by any other name would smell as sweet. He's a 50-ton robot crafted of space titanium, designed by outer-space bad guys to take over the earth. Directed by Jun Fukuda,

it tells an okay science-fiction mystery, and is one of the few times when we don't care that it's not really a film about Godzilla. The special effects are by Teruyoshi Nakano, and they are acceptable for the job at hand. New World Video started selling it in 1988 in a beautiful color box which alone is worth a look.

15. *Terror Of MechaGodzilla*, 1975. One year later Toho did a sequel, featuring the return of the outer-space baddies, the two expected monsters, plus a new one called Titanosaurus. It looks pretty much like the one from the previous year, although the opening credit sequence features some great original Godzilla music, new orchestrations of the old Ifukube scores. Ishiro Honda came back to direct this one. Bob Conn Enterprises put it in the theatres, but under the shortened title of *Terror Of Godzilla*. The kids probably couldn't pronounce MechaGodzilla. Paramount Home Video picked it up for video distribution in 1988.

16. *Godzilla 1985*. Godzilla was dormant for 10 years. And when he returned he did it in a big way. No longer the kiddies pal; he's returned as the original fearsome beast — and once again he's got Raymond Burr to contend with. Directed by Koji Hashimoto and with a stirring new musical score by Reijiro Koroku, this film did decent business for a month when New World released it here in America. They also did okay with it on videotape. However, it must not have lived up to the original expectations, since the next one, *Godzilla Vs. Biollante* could find no distributor here.

(continued)



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17. *Godzilla Vs. Biollante*, 1991. An excellent state-of-the-art film, with a bio-chemical foe worthy of Godzilla. Well directed by Kazuki Omori, and with a tremendous orchestral score created by none other than Akira Ifukube, implementing many of the great original themes from the early films. We've seen the Japanese-language version from Toho Video, which is letterboxed and stereo. It's easy to follow even to those of us who don't speak Japanese, and is very worth seeing. If your city has a Japanese

district, head over there and see if there is a video store carrying this film. Although it has been translated and dubbed into English for over a year, no distributor has seen fit to put it into theatres or video stores.

18. *Godzilla Vs. King Ghidorah*, 1992. Representatives from the year 2204 visit the year 1992, and explain to Japanese leaders that they must destroy Godzilla, lest he destroy all of Japan in the very near future. But nothing is what it seems to be. Actually the future-people have come back in time to synthesize the monster Ghidorah for the purpose of destroying Japan, knowing that Godzilla would thwart such a plan. It seems that, in the 23rd Century, Japan was the supreme monarchy, actually owning most of the countries of the world. The future-people want to reduce Japan to cinders in 1992, thus returning balance to the world for centuries to come.

The implication made is that Godzilla is a protector spirit, always looking over Japan and there must always be a Godzilla, somewhere in space and time. For when the old Godzilla is successfully eliminated with some deft time-stepping, a new and larger, more powerful Godzilla emerges in present-times — to save Japan by killing King Ghidorah in the climactic and thoroughly expected beast battle of this film.

On the way to this grand finale we see plenty of time travel, cyborgs as fast as the ones in *Terminator II*, two dinosaurs who each mutate into Godzillas, flying saucers that turn out to be time machines, and much more. *Godzilla Vs. King Ghidorah* comes dangerously close to returning us to the films of the 70's when Godzilla himself would appear only at the end of what actually is some completely different story. Godzilla is a good-guy once again, perhaps on his way — given a few more sequels — to becoming the kiddies pal once again.

There is a touching moment during our time travel back to 1944, when we see the monster in his pre-Godzilla state as a mere Tyrannosaurus. During World War II, when a unit of Japanese soldiers stationed on Lagos Island is attacked by American forces, the dinosaur appears and kills the American soldiers, though the dinosaur itself is severely wounded by American guns and shellfire. As the Japanese troops stand before the fallen form of the dying dinosaur, their commander solemnly mourns, "We regret we must leave you, our savior, behind. We can't carry you to safety. We will never forget how you saved us." This establishes Godzilla as a protector-monster for Japan, always and forever.

When the clash between monsters finally occurs, it is well worth the wait. The special effects are dynamic and realistic, and the ac-

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tion is incredible! This clash contains more numerous and more spectacular pyrotechnics than any Godzilla film thus far. Flames, sparks, explosions and death rays abound as Godzilla defeats the original Ghidorah, later to mix it up with a more terrifying Mecha-Ghidorah!!! Though both monsters seem to perish at the end of the film, the door is left wide open for a sequel, with the potential awakening of Godzilla.

Perhaps the greatest news is the return of Akira Irukabe as musical composer — to score his first Godzilla film since 1975. *Markette Magazine* reported in their Fall 1991 issue that the planners of the film expected Irukabe to write a new Godzilla march for this latest, and most modern film. Actually, the Maestro reorchestrated his original monster themes once again, to provide a glorious and arousing musical score that evokes thrills and cinematic danger galore. We even heard a few bars of the original Mothra chant woven into this great accompaniment. In short — it's wonderful!!!



We loved the music and hope you will too!

We've seen plenty of news items about this film, but so far no American distributor has picked up on it. An anonymous video pirate has been circulating VHS copies of the film, (in Japanese language with English subtitles) almost from the date of the Japanese premiere of the film. To their credit, the pirates have created a nice color box-cover in which to sell their stolen wares.

The cast of *Godzilla Vs. King Ghidorah* includes Anna Nakagawa as a lovely hero from

the 23rd Century; Megumi Odaka reprising her role from the previous *Godzilla Vs. Biollante*; Kenji Sahara; and Occidental actor Chuck Wilson as a "Terminator" act-alike robot from the future. Directed by Kazuki Omori, Produced by Shoji Tomiyama, Special Effects directed by Kkoichi Kawakita.

We look forward to the much publicized American theatrical debut of this latest entry in the famed saga of the incredible titan of terror — Godzilla, King of the Monsters!



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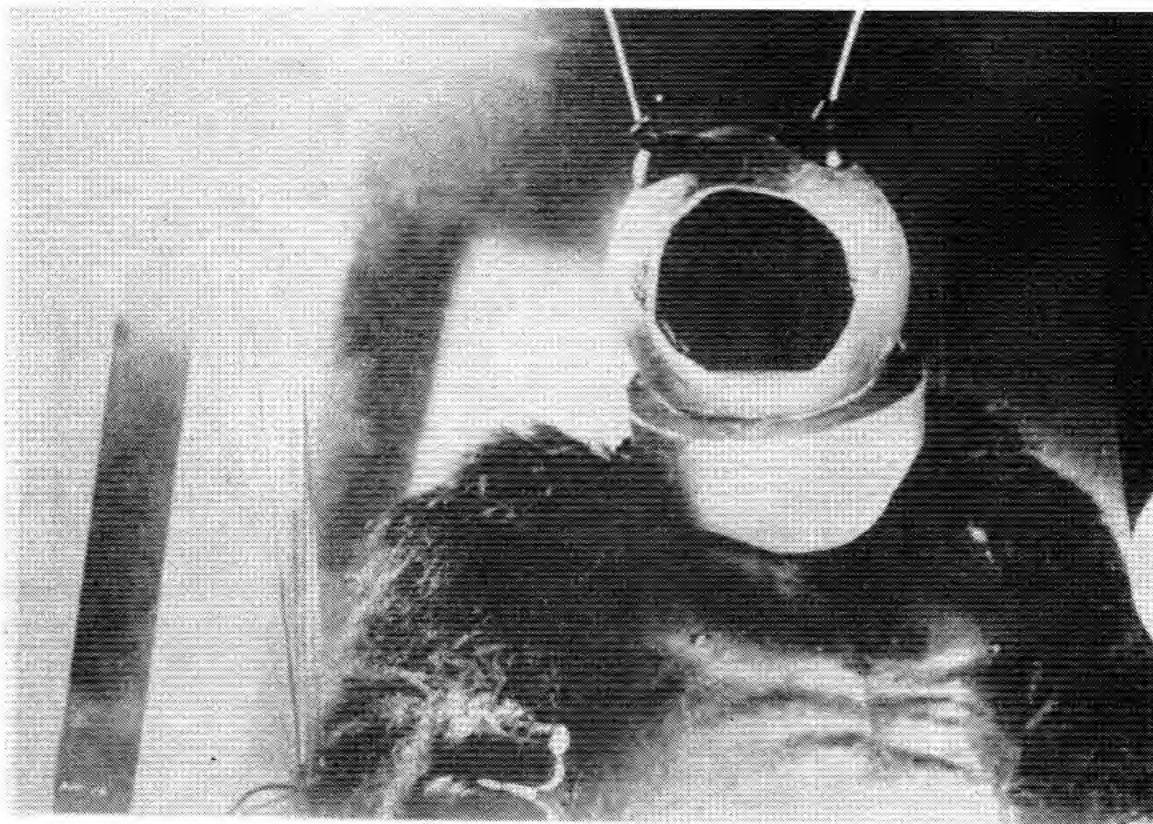
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Potty Animal



The Great Guidance Ro-Man (known more familiarly as "The Great One")

by Edward G. Barnett

WARNING: To anyone who has not seen the movie *Robot Monster*: This review reveals certain plot elements...not that there are many to reveal.

We've all heard of the Flat Earth Society; and I've encountered at least one person who firmly believes that man has never been to the moon. I wonder if there are people — not organized, but scattered about, let's say—who believe that there is really no such thing as a 3-D movie, that it's all a clever scam, played on peoples' susceptibility when gathered in groups.

Well, maybe not; but blame the Rhino Video release of the excrescent nightmare classic *Robot Monster* for such idle musings. Once I had the little 3-D glasses on, (the glasses are included

with the video), I was so ready to enjoy the "Tru Stereo 3D Process" in the privacy and comfort of my own home, that even the FBI warning at the beginning of the tape appeared to be in 3-D! Indeed, the opening scenes of the movie were quite clearly in rather breathtaking three-dimensions, the screen displaying a great depth (a depth, remarkable enough, not shared by anything else about this movie). A few more scenes go by, however painfully; and, then, no sooner than you can say P. T. Barnum (if you say it really slow), it dawns on you that, for the past who-know's-how-many minutes, you have been sitting there, staring at a 2-D picture: A picture tinted, of course, by the cardboard glasses on your head, but without a 3-D effect in sight!

I don't know what percentage of the

film is actually shot in 3-D, but a good portion of it is, most certainly, not. On multiple viewings (to which I subjected myself for the sake of this article) one learns to take the glasses off and put them back on, according to the requirements of a particular sequence; but not even this is simple, for the selection of 3-D sequences seems to have purely random. Within one scene, there is inter-cutting between shots in 3-D and 2-D, and a scene that was in two dimensions suddenly bursts into three! Orson Welles, referring to the long and difficult time spent completing his *Othello* (filmed over a period of years, and recently restored and re-released), stated that, at times, the actors actually change continents in the middle of a phrase; this is perhaps nothing, compared to the pan-dimen-

sionality of *Robot Monster*.

Perhaps the little boy in the story, Johnny, is afflicted with some sort of intermittent sight in one eye-ball, allowing him only occasional stereoscopic vision. After all, it is Johnny's strange, possibly even psychotic dream which makes up the bulk of the film; perhaps we are meant to see things the way Johnny would see them.

The fact that this story is a child's dream is absolutely sans any element of surprise; it's made abundantly clear near the beginning. One moment, Johnny's mother is a widow, and family is enjoying a lovely picnic amongst the rubble of a rocky canyon; next moment, Johnny's father is a great scientist, a man who has not only developed a serum that eradicates all illness, but one who is also sufficiently unencumbered with any ethics to have tested this new serum out on his whole family, kids included. On top of this, the world has very nearly been destroyed by Ro-man the Robot Monster from the planet Ro-Man(!)

What a Robot Monster he is, too. His appearance is by now nearly legendary. A bulky, slow moving creature with the body of a gorilla suit and a sort of diving helmet (to which some sort of antennae have been attached) for a head. Through a little glass set in the diving helmet, there is vaguely visible some sort of stocking-mask face.

Of course, as Ro-Man himself explains to his boss, the Great Guidance Ro-Man (known more familiarly as "The Great One"), the Robot Monster's slowness is due to the gravity of Earth, which is stronger than that of the Ro-Man planet; or at least this is the excuse he gives as the lateness for his report, which he makes over some funky old television screen which he has set up in the mouth of a cave.

And to be fair to Ro-Man's appearance, he is just the sort of goofy monster that a kid might actually dream up, or at least a kid that has been reading too many monster comic books and watching too many space-man movies!

The film opens with Johnny, wearing his ultra-cool space-man helmet, running around the rock-strewn canyon, blowing bubbles from his toy space-gun, and refusing to play "house" with his sister, while muttering darkly and endlessly about beings from outer space.

The two kids come across a couple of archaeologists who are excavating prehistoric drawings from the mouth of the same cave that will later serve as Ro-Man's base.

"Was he a space-robot?" the little girl asks, indicating one of the cave drawings. She has obviously been affected



The 'gripping' drama that is *Robot Monster*.

by her brother's ceaseless prattle..

The two kids are recalled back to the picnic sight by their mother, an older sister, Alice. Possibly for sentimental reasons which are never divulged, this daffy family has chosen as the perfect picnic spot a particularly rocky area of the canyon, an area where boulders abound.

After eating, the whole family suddenly becomes so tired that they are able to sleep peacefully on the bare rocky ground; that is, except for Johnny, who leaps up, and proceeds to lead us into his awful nightmare.

The small group of humans that have survived the terrible combination of Ro-Man's deadly Calcinator Death Rays, and the world's combined atomic arsenal (unleashed in the confusion), owe their survival to Johnny's dad's aforementioned lack of ethics: It seems that the serum provided immunization to Ro-Man's C-Rays (and, presumably, atomic fall-out!)

The family stands amid the ruins of a house — just a few walls, barely standing, no roof — and they speak proudly of how Ro-Man's deadly beams were all deflected away from the house.

This sort of thing is the real meat of the movie (rancid and wormy meat though it may be): A series of strange contradictions, reflecting the basic dream/reality dichotomy of the story (or the 3D/2D dichotomy of the photography... or, the basic enigma of the Robot Monster, himself: is he a Robot, or a Monster? Animal or machine? Inspired creation or budgetary inability to afford a REAL robot costume?) For instance:

The Ro-men are "built to have no emotions", says the Great Guidance Ro-Man; and yet, Ro-Man himself states that the cities of Earth have been spared destruction, as they will provide the Ro-people with "much amusement"!

In one scene, Johnny asks his mother for "a little water." The two walk off-screen, and, while the father and Alice continue conversing on screen, from off-camera comes the sound of not one, but two tremendous splashes, as if the mom has dumped a couple of buckets of water over the thirsty lad!

The Robot Monster has absolutely no idea where the surviving humans are; as far as he knows, they could be anywhere in the world. And, yet, he asks them to meet him, within an hour, in an area very close to his Ro-Man cave!

Towards the end of the film, the Great One decides to destroy the planet Earth. "Cosmic Q rays" are released, and these, for reasons obscure, cause the sudden reappearance of stock footage of dinosaurs, "to devour whatever remains of life." Yet, all of the dinosaurs shown were herbivores (actually, one of the poor creatures looks like an armadillo with a fake horn glued to its head!).

Then again, this is all a child's dream, and so not bound to any real logic. Several years ago, I read in an encyclopedia that one of the classic symptoms of schizophrenia is a preoccupation of world destruction fantasies. Since Johnny's dream ends with the world being destroyed, are we to conclude that Johnny is schizophrenic?

(continued)

Within the dream, Johnny's little sister, Carla, fares not well at all: he obviously considers her to be rather dim-witted, possessed of only the slightest awareness of what is going on. When this is all over, she wants to know, can she go over to Janie's house and borrow her dolls? Little does the poor girl realize that Janie has long since been destroyed in the terrible atomic/cosmic ray/calculator death ray holocaust, as have, no doubt, the dolls! Later the little girl confronts the Robot Monster, "My daddy won't let you hurt me," she taunts, standing not three feet away from him; and Ro-Man promptly grabs her, and so she dies a gruesome death (in 3-D).

But then, almost everybody in this film dies a gruesome death, including the Robot Monster himself, who is killed by the Great One for wanting to be "like the Hu-Man."

"Suppose I were a man," Ro-Man asks Alice. "Would you treat me like a man?"

Of course, this is not the only astonishing bit of dialogue the film boasts. At one point, Ro-Man tries to destroy little Johnny with the Calcinator death-ray. After Ro-Man has blinked from positive to negative several times, accompanied by the crackling C-ray sound effects, Johnny unharmed, looks him square in the eye and says, "You look like a pooped-out pin-wheel!" As Oliver Hardy might have said, "Who writes this stuff?"

At the end of the film, when all has been revealed to have been a dream (but of course, we knew it was all along!), and everything seems to be back to normal, and everyone is safe, the camera lingers on Ro-Man's cave...and then suddenly, the Robot Monster comes lumbering out, straight for the camera, arms extended, sizzling with deadly C-rays; and he does this three times in succession! Three times the terror! (By the way, this final scene is not in 3-D either).

Now let me make the obligatory positive comment about the film: Unlike a lot of 3-D movies, at no point does *Robot Monster* pander to its audience by throwing things at the screen. I might also add that, by no means is this the worst movie ever made: the existence of a film called *The Beast Of Yucca Flats* denies *Robot Monster* any hope of claiming that distinction.



Is the secret to *Robot Monster* hidden in the dream of a psychotic child?

That said, this is truly a lousy movie...

A last couple of notes: George Barrows, the man who owned the gorilla suit and so got to play the Robot Monster, made a couple of appearances on *The Beverly Hillbillies* in the 60's, playing both himself and a gorilla; the storyline involved Granny (Irene Ryan) wanting to buy a gorilla from the zoo, so that it could do chores around the house. These George Barrows appearances I remember rather fondly from my childhood.

I might also add that, by no means is this the worst movie ever made: the existence of a film called *The Beast Of Yucca Flats* denies *Robot Monster* any hope of claiming that distinction.

Also, let me point out the existence of an uncredited remake of *Robot Monster*: the 1974 Doctor Who adventure, "The Sontaran Experiment."

In this particular installment of the long-running BBC science fiction series, the Doctor and his companions travel to the Earth in the distant future. The planet has been deserted in the face of some catastrophe, although it is now habitable again. The time travelers encounter a small band of humans from one of the Earth colony planets.

These humans are being terrorized by the evil alien, Styre.

Styre, of the Sontaran race, is conducting insidious experiments on the humans, in order to study their physiology and determine mankind's weaknesses. He has set up shop at the mouth of a cave (just like *Robot Monster*), and reports to his leader over a television screen (just like *Robot Monster*!). In fact, as in *Robot Monster*, both Styre and his leader are actually played by the same actor, in the same costume, although I don't believe that the actor in *Doctor Who* got to take the costume home with him at night.

Just like the Ro-Man, Styre receives his strength from an energizer unit which he keeps in his space-ship.

However, in *Doctor Who* the monster of the piece shows absolutely no sexual interest in the Doctor's female companion, Sarah; and the good guys win the day, saving the Earth; and the dialogue is actually good, my favorite moment being when, after seeing Styre shoot down one of the fleeing humans, Sarah screams, and the Sontaran looks at her curiously and asks, "Why did you make that disagreeable noise?"

Doctor Who: The Sontaran Experiment was recently released on video in the U.K., and I expect that it will eventually be released here. It is not, of course, in 3-D; but, save your *Robot Monster* glasses, anyway; as far as the 3-D goes, you might not be able to tell the difference.

.....

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The Surrealistic Comedy Of Harry Langdon



Langdon in a publicity still, probably for the Mack Sennett short *Feet Of Mud* (1924).

By Mike Copner

Directly in front of the box office at the Chinese Theatre on Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame you'll find the star displaying the name of Harry Langdon. Millions see his star each

year and may well ask, "Who was Harry Langdon?" Film critic Walter Kerr used that very question as a chapter heading in his book *The Silent Clowns*, and went on to answer that Harry was "a genuine original, strangest by far of all the fantasists who walked real city streets."

But there are other answers. Stan Laurel called Langdon "a great comedian who had it in him to be a great actor." Writer Kevin Brownlow referred to him as "the fourth genius of screen comedy." One-time Langdon director Frank Capra claimed "he was the most tragic figure I ever came across in show business."

A vaudeville performer since his youth, Langdon at age 39 was hired by comedy producer Mack Sennett to star in a series of two-reel slapstick shorts. But Sennett sensed that there was something "different" about his new comic discovery. Just before the release of Langdon's first short, the *Los Angeles Morning Telegraph* (Dec. 20, 1923) announced: "Mack Sennett says he has a new comedy find who has the potentials of a Chaplin."

By 1926 Langdon had made 22 comedies for Sennett, some of these being the most hilarious — and downright bizarre — comedies ever filmed. Throughout this time the Chaplin comparisons continued, which was unfair, since Langdon had a style all his own and a multi-dimensional character that was beyond the range of any other silent screen comedian. Thus today Langdon is considered to be among the four great comedians of that classic era, along with Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd.

Sennett provided his new comedian with a staff of directors and writers who helped shape the stories and gags to the slower-paced style that Harry seemed to have. Harry Edwards, Frank Capra and Arthur Ripley were the main members of this team. What they created was different than anything else before or since in the cinema.

Things happened like clockwork in the Langdon universe; by accident, all events worked with mathematical timing and were therefore magical, but unnoticed by all, except for Harry —

who looked on with the wide-eyed wonder of a small boy. In a medium of physical humor, little Harry's was often a psychological kind of comedy. Many of the hilarious scenes in his films were the moments waiting for Harry to blink his eyes, registering that a though had finally made its way into his brain.

Frank Capra's oft-quoted formula for writing a Langdon script was called *The Law Of The Brick*. "Langdon might be saved from the cop by a brick falling on the cop's head, but it was absolutely verboten that Langdon in any way motivate the brick's fall."

By the time of his 14th film, *His Marriage Wow*, everything had fallen into place. It had taken over a year of creativity, but now Langdon's screen character was perfected, and the comic reality within which he operated had been defined. Also, in this landmark film, the major elements of his official costume finally came together. The mashed-in hat and oversized coat were of major importance. He looked like a little boy playing dress-up in daddy's new suit.

From this point on the films became a unified body of work. Every month a new Langdon comedy unreeled before a delighted international audience, and his unique brand of humor was understood and loved nearly world-wide.

In his 19th film for Sennett, *There He Goes*, a longer running time was granted for the development of gags and character; the film was a three-reeler, as were all remaining films made under this contract.

Although relatively new to the silver screen, the demand for his work made him Sennett's hottest property. In a series of contract revisions, Harry's salary increased from \$250 a week to a staggering \$7,500 a week. In the last year of his contract, Harry earned over a quarter of a million dollars.

Among Harry's followers were the executives of the larger studios who had witnessed the little elf's box-office success and wanted him in their fold. There were many offers for feature length films, and Langdon finally signed with First National Pictures on Sept. 16, 1925. The arrangement called for Harry to produce and star in three features in a one-year period, with an option for three more the following year. He was to begin as soon as his contract with Sennett expired.

The first feature was *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp*, which co-starred Joan Crawford. The story was episodic and slow starting, but it provided plenty of ready-made jokes and allowed Harry some elegant pantomime. The film garnered good reviews and was a solid financial success. It even broke box-



Langdon and Doris Dawson share a moment in the feature *Heart Trouble* (First National, 1928).



office records at Loew's State Theater in Los Angeles, taking in \$31,500 the first week.

Harry then rushed into his second feature, *The Strong Man*. It was his longest silent film (78 minutes), and his greatest critical success. Yet it was with this film that Langdon's troubles began.

As a producer of his own films, Langdon had promoted Frank Capra from writer to the position of director, replacing Harry Edwards who'd directed nearly every Langdon film thus far. Capra had wanted to be a director ever since he first set foot on the Mack Sennett lot, and now Langdon made

(continued)

him one. Yet of all the advisors who had followed Langdon for Sennett to First National, Capra turned out to be the one least ideal to direct Harry.

In later years Capra explained that the very basis of his theory on film making was the "one man-one film" concept. In essence, he felt that films shouldn't be made by committee; that the final decisions must rest entirely with the director. Such diverse comedians as Stan Laurel and Jackie Gleason have chosen to have their films written by teams of writers. And therein lies the conflict. Capra was a director. Langdon was a comedian. Capra may have directed an excellent film in *The Strong Man*, but it wasn't the best Langdon film. Harry's character took a back seat in this forerunner to Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes To Washington*, and Capra chose to ignore certain darker and fascinating aspects of the childish, amoral elf. Also, the rip-snorting conclusion may have been exciting, but it distances Harry from his audience.

From that time on Langdon's troubles seemed to increase. There was much behind-the-scenes fighting during the next feature, *Long Pants*. When that production was completed, Langdon fired Capra. Harry directed the next three films himself, but with mixed results.

Also at this time, First National began slashing the budgets, allowing less time and money to complete a film. Whereas Chaplin would take one year to produce *The Gold Rush*, Langdon was expected to turn out a feature in six weeks.

Some people involved claimed that Langdon developed a gigantic ego and became impossible to work with. For whatever reasons, his last three films did not live up to expectations, and

were not successful. His contract was not renewed.

Unable to find work in Hollywood, Harry went back to Vaudeville where he was still welcomed. He played one month at the RKO Palace in New York and garnered excellent reviews.

Based on that success, Harry was able to secure continuous film work on his return to Hollywood, making his first talkies for Hal Roach in 1929. These were a return to short subjects, and a far cry from the blazing success he'd had just two years before, but at least it was lucrative work in the midst of the depression.

He also starred in various features through the mid 1930's. The best of these co-starred him with Al Jolson for the musical, *Hallelujah! I'm A Bum*. Of all the silent comics who entered the talkies, Harry's voice was the one most suited to his character, much more so than Keaton or Chaplin. The pitch and the hesitant manner of expression all made his character work in sound films, provided the material was up to par.

In 1934 Columbia Pictures eagerly snapped Harry up for their short subject mill. He was re-united with his old pals, Harry Edwards and Arthur Ripley who directed many of these films. Langdon wrote scripts for some of them.

Langdon also co-wrote scripts for four Laurel and Hardy films. Stan Laurel was a good friend of Langdon's, and one of the few people Harry and his wife enjoyed socializing with in Hollywood. Hal Roach hired Langdon as a gag-writer at Stan's request, and also cast him in two Roach features, *Zenobia* (with Oliver Hardy) and *There Goes My Heart* (with Fredrick March and Virginia Bruce).

Throughout this time and into the 1940's, Harry Langdon also found work

at such economy studios as Monogram and PRC. One of the best of his films was *House Of Errors* (1942), which Harry had written for himself. It contained many new and very funny sight gags, and told an amusing war-time story.

When he wasn't appearing in the films, he was still often hired for his writing talents. Another screenplay he worked on was *Roadshow*, starring Adolphe Menjou. Therefore, the old tale that Langdon died in poverty and out of work in Hollywood is obviously a myth. His widow, Mable Langdon, told me in 1979 that it still gave her a heartache to hear how Harry supposedly died broke. "We had a lovely home," she said. "He was working all the time. He had ups and downs, but he'd had 25 years of that before he ever got into films! He knew how to bounce back."

Indeed, Langdon is one of the Hollywood stars who actually worked up to the very end: died on a soundstage, with his greasepaint on, doing what he loved best. He was performing a soft shoe dance routine for a Republic film, *Swinging On A Rainbow*. During a rehearsal, Harry collapsed, went into a coma from which he never recovered. Several days later he died of cerebral hemorrhage on December 22, 1944.

As of this writing, a new book put together by Mable Langdon about her famous husband, is being considered by several publishers. And at the same time his films are starting to be distributed to the home video tape market, giving a whole new generation a chance to witness the work of a true comic genius. As more films become available, Harry Langdon will surely reclaim his rightful stature among the greatest comedians of the silent screen.

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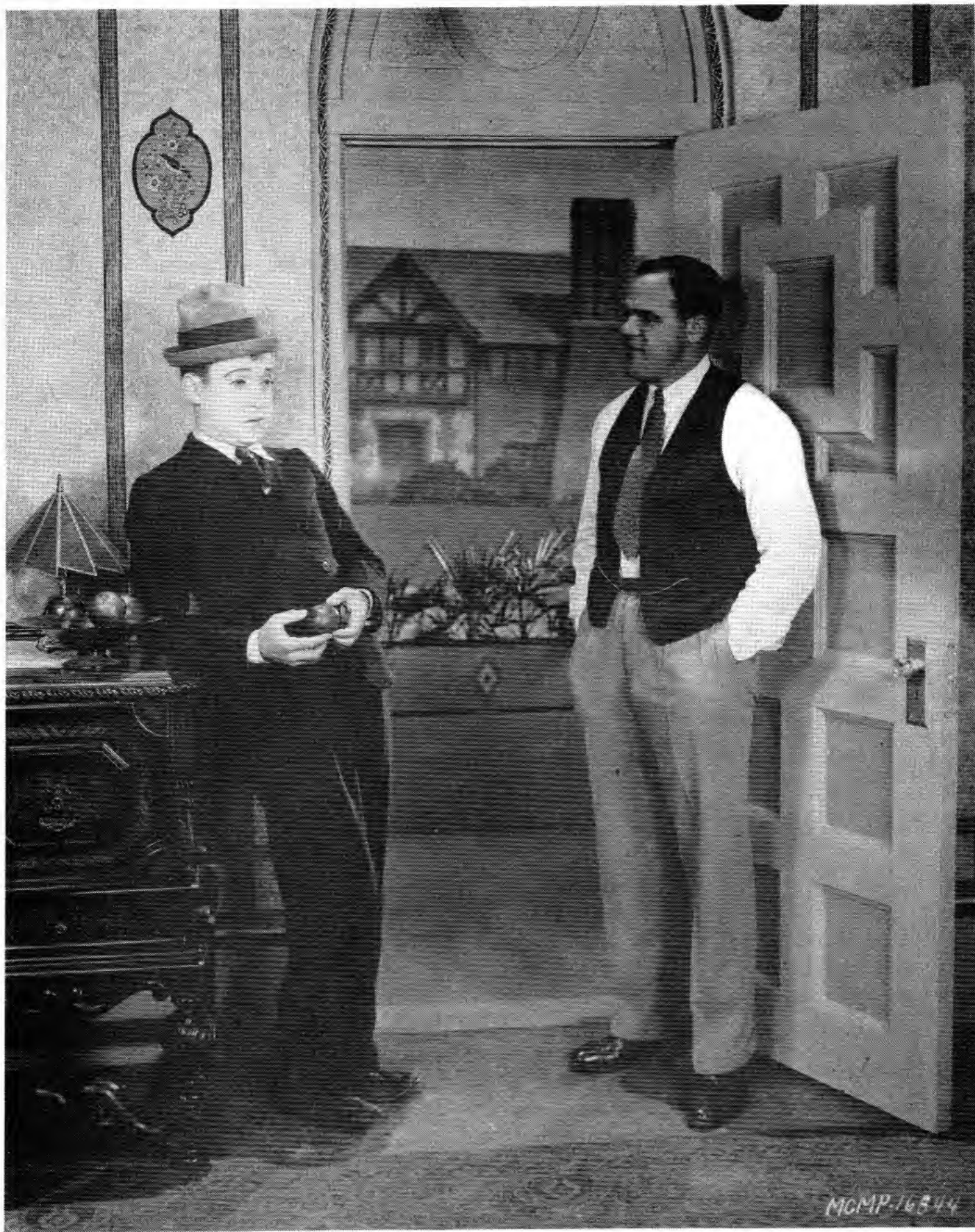
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In August of 1929, this publicity photo was circulated to the nation's magazines and newspapers with the following caption:
Hal Roach surveys his latest star, Harry Langdon, who is now making sound comedies for the Hal Roach studios, which are to be released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

THE FILMS OF HARRY LANGDON

1. PICKING PEACHES
Sennett - 1924
2. SMILE PLEASE
Sennett - 1924
3. SHANGHAIED LOVERS
Sennett - 1924
4. FLICKERING YOUTH
Sennett - 1924
5. THE CAT'S MEOW
Sennett - 1924
6. HIS NEW MAMA
Sennett - 1924
7. THE FIRST HUNDRED YEARS
Sennett - 1924
8. LUCK O' THE FOOLISH
Sennett - 1924
9. THE HANSOM CABMAN
Sennett - 1924
10. ALL NIGHT LONG
Sennett - 1924
11. FEET OF MUD
Sennett - 1924
12. THE SEA SQUAK
Sennett - 1924
13. BOOBS IN THE WOOD
Sennett - 1924
14. HIS MARRIAGE WOW
Sennett - 1925
15. PLAIN CLOTHES
Sennett - 1925
16. REMEMBER WHEN?
Sennett - 1925
17. HORACE GREELEY, JR.
Sennett - 1925
18. LUCKY STARS
Sennett - 1925
19. THERE HE GOES
Sennett - 1925
20. SATURDAY AFTERNOON
Sennett - 1925
21. SOLDIER MAN
Sennett - 1925
22. FIDDLESTICKS
Sennett - 1925
23. HIS FIRST FLAME
Sennett - 1925 (feature)
24. ELLA CINDERS
First National - 1926 (feature)
25. TRAMP, TRAMP, TRAMP
First National - 1926 (feature)
26. THE STRONG MAN
First National - 1926 (feature)
27. LONG PANTS
First National - 1927 (feature)
28. THREE'S A CROWD
First National - 1927 (feature)
29. THE CHASER
First National - 1928 (feature)
30. HEART TROUBLE
First National - 1928 (feature)
31. HOTTER THAN HOT
Hal Roach Studios - 1929
32. SKY BOY
Roach - 1929
33. SKIRT SHY
Roach - 1929
34. THE HEAD GUY
Roach - 1930
35. THE FIGHTING PARSON
Roach - 1930
36. THE BIG KICK
Roach - 1930
37. THE SHRIMP
Roach - 1930
38. THE KING
Roach - 1930
39. A SOLDIER'S PLAYTHING
Warner Bros. - 1930 (feature)
40. SEE AMERICA THIRST
Universal - 1930 (feature)
41. THE BIG FLASH
Educational - 1932
42. TIRED FEET
Educational - 1933
43. THE HITCH HIKER
Educational - 1933
44. KNIGHT DUTY
Educational - 1933
45. TIED FOR LIFE
Educational - 1933
46. HOOKS AND JABS
Educational - 1933
47. THE STAGE HAND
Educational - 1933
48. TRIMMED IN FURS
Educational - 1933
49. HOLLYWOOD ON PARADE
Paramount - 1933
50. HALLELUJAH! I'M A BUM!
United Artists - 1933 (feature)
51. MY WEAKNESS
Fox - 1933 (feature)
52. MARRIAGE HUMOR
Paramount - 1933
53. ON ICE
Paramount - 1933
54. ROAMING ROMEO
Paramount - 1933
55. CIRCUS HOODOO
Paramount - 1934
56. PETTING PREFERRED
Paramount - 1934
57. COUNSEL ON DE FENCE
Columbia - 1934
58. SHIVERS
Columbia - 1934
59. HIS BRIDAL SWEET
Columbia - 1935
60. THE LEATHER NECKER
Columbia - 1935
61. ATLANTIC ADVENTURE
Columbia - 1935
62. HIS MARRIAGE MIX-UP
Columbia - 1935
63. I DON'T REMEMBER
Columbia - 1935
64. A DOGGONE MIX-UP
Columbia - 1938
65. SUE MY LAWYER
Columbia - 1938
66. MAD ABOUT MONEY
Biltmore - 1938 (feature)
67. THERE GOES MY HEART
Roach - 1938 (feature)
68. ZENOBIA
Roach - 1939 (feature)
69. COLD TURKEY
Columbia - 1940
70. MISBEHAVING HUSBANDS
PRC - 1940 (feature)
71. ALL AMERICAN CO-ED
Roach - 1941 (feature)
72. DOUBLE TROUBLE
Monogram - 1941 (feature)
73. GOODNESS! A GHOST
RKO - 1941
74. SITTING PRETTY
Jam Handy Pics - 1941
75. HOUSE OF ERRORS
PRC - 1942 (feature)
76. WHAT MAKES LIZZY DIZZY?
Columbia - 1942
77. TIRED MAN, SPARE MY TIRES
Columbia - 1942
78. CARRY HARRY
Columbia - 1942
79. FASHIONS OF 1942
Regal - 1942
80. PIANO MOONER
Columbia - 1942
81. A BLITZ ON THE FRITZ
Columbia - 1943
82. BLONDE AND GROOM
Columbia - 1943
83. HERE COMES MR. JERK
Columbia - 1943
84. SPOTLIGHT REVUE
Monogram - 1943 (feature)
85. TO HEIR IS HUMAN
Columbia - 1944
86. DEFECTIVE DETECTIVES
Columbia - 1944
87. HOT RHYTHM
Monogram - 1944 (feature)
88. BLOCK BUSTERS
Monogram - 1944 (feature)
89. MOPEY DOPE
Columbia - 1944
90. SNOOPER SERVICE
Columbia - 1945
91. PISTOL PACKIN' NITWITS
Columbia - 1945
92. SWINGIN' ON A RAINBOW
Republic - 1945 (feature)

LANGDON MEETS LUGOSI

by Mike Copner

Harry Langdon and Bela Lugosi — together in one tremendous motion picture! That's always been a fantasy of mine. I can't see any reason why they shouldn't have worked together on screen. Lugosi is to horror what Langdon is to comedy. They have to be two of the most stylized performers, with the most elaborate — some would say eccentric — manners of expression ever to appear on screen. It would be a treat to see the two of them work together.

And why not? The box-office thrives on bringing star personalities together in one huge blow-out extravaganza. We've had Mae West Meets W. C. Fields (*My Little Chickadee*), James Stewart Meets John Wayne (*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*), Boris Karloff Meets Bela Lugosi (many, many films), King Kong Vs. Godzilla, *Frankenstein Meets The Wolfman*, and so on.

We know that Lugosi wanted to do comedy. And it's reported that Langdon wanted to get away from comedy and enter other realms, such as the type of pathos that Chaplin was doing.

What if Langdon and Lugosi had teamed up?

Actually, it is amazing how closely their careers paralleled one another. In the late 1920's, Harry Langdon had his star contract at First National, producing six features over a two-year period. Lugosi also worked on the lot in one feature. A few years later the situation was reversed. Bela Lugosi was on top of the world with his lead role in *Dracula* at Universal in 1931. That same year Harry Langdon worked at Universal in a feature called *See America Thirst*, a prohibition comedy that was heralded as his "comeback film".

Still later, in the early 1940's both

stars ended up working at some of the same studios, including Monogram, PRC, Republic, and Columbia. Did the two happen to meet at some point?

Somewhat surprisingly, both performers ended up doing supporting roles in Bowery Boys comedies at Monogram. In two films, Lugosi provided the spooky bit for the Boys to react to in their usual rowdy style. Wouldn't it have been more natural for Lugosi to have been frightening the daylights out of shy little Harry Langdon, who could have provided a more elegant compliment to Lugosi's terrors?

At PRC, alias the Producers Releasing Corporation, Langdon did appear in a dark house mystery entitled *House Of Errors*, wherein he is frightened by Nazi spies who are trying to break in and steal a secret military gun he is guarding. This is the kind of thing which the two could have played to the hilt. Lugosi and Langdon each doing what they do best, each one complimenting the other with his own filmic bag of tricks.

About the only other parallel we might add now, years after the death of each star, is that each of them fathered a son who has gone on to great things. Bela Lugosi Jr. is one of the most highly respected corporate attorneys in Los Angeles. And Harry Langdon Jr. is one of the most successful and talented portrait photographers in Hollywood.

But the story ends there. The two legendary screen stars of this tale never did appear on screen in a film together. For years I've half-seriously thought about trying to cut together scenes of each in their spooky-house films (say, Bela in *Ghosts On The Loose* and Harry in *House Of Errors*) and see if any results could come of such a hybrid. But

it wouldn't be the same; it wouldn't be for real.

Strange as it seems, it almost was for real!

The momentous teaming of the two greats almost came to pass!!

And no one has seemed to know about it — until now!!!

Just last month, our publisher Buddy Barnett unearthed the actual contract, signed by Harry Langdon, for his part in Bela Lugosi's mystery serial, *The Whispering Shadow*.

This 12-chapter cliff-hanger released by Mascot Pictures in February of 1933, almost brought these two masters of their craft together. Bela was signed up for \$10,000. Harry had signed aboard to do his stint at \$1,000.

But something happened. Just days before shooting began, Langdon bowed out for some reason. Perhaps it was a "better offer" to star in his own one-a-month series of comedy two-reelers for Educational Pictures. Whatever the reason, just days before shooting began, Harry Langdon was replaced by another silent screen superstar, Karl Dane, who was now happy for the four days work which the part called for.

As you may know, this comedic supporting role turns out in the end to be the actual mastermind of the film, the *Whispering Shadow* himself! This part was a borrowing of nearly every element of *The Shadow* who was popular at that time in films, radio, and the pulp magazine novels.

Can you imagine? Throughout the film you would have naturally suspected Bela Lugosi of all the mysterious crimes, and then — in the last moments the real mastermind turns out to be Harry Langdon! The one we least suspect!!!!

It almost happened. For the proof, just turn the page. . . .

MASCOT PICTURES CORPORATION
TIFFANY PRODUCTIONS, INC.
ARTIST'S CONTRACT

AGREEMENT, made this 26th day of November, 1932,
between MASCOT PICTURES CORPORATION
(hereinafter called "producer") and
(hereinafter called "artist") HARRY LANGDON

1. The producer hereby engages the artist to render services as such in the character of Sparks
in the motion picture the working title of which is now "THE WHISPERING SHADOW"

at a salary of One thousand and 00/100 DOLLARS (\$1,000.00).

~~for the period of 14 days~~ The artist accepts said engagement upon the terms herein specified.
2. The employment herein shall begin on or about the 18th day of December, 1932, for the part consisting of four (4) days' consecutive work, additional days to be pro-rated.
and shall continue thereafter until the completion of the photographing of said character. If after the expiration of the term hereof the producer should desire the services of the artist in making retakes or in taking added scenes, or in making any change or changes in said photoplay, the artist agrees to render such services in connection therewith as and when the producer may request, at the same rate of compensation and upon the same terms as provided for herein, said compensation to be paid only for the days on which the artist is actually so employed. The phrase "on or about" as hereinabove used shall allow a latitude of forty-eight (48) hours (exclusive of Sundays and holidays) either prior to or after the date hereinabove specified as the commencement of the term hereof; it being agreed that the exact date for the commencement of the term hereof is to be specified by the producer and is to be not earlier than forty-eight (48) hours before the date hereinabove specified, nor later than forty-eight (48) hours after the date hereinabove specified (exclusive of Sundays and holidays). The term "character" as used in this agreement shall be deemed to refer to said character as now written and/or as it may from time to time hereafter be rewritten and/or lengthened and/or shortened by the producer in the exercise of its sole discretion and judgment.

3. The artist agrees to be prompt in appearing for work as required by the producer, to perform the required services hereunder in a conscientious and painstaking manner, and to abide by the reasonable rules and regulations covering the same, including all studio rules and regulations of the producer. The artist agrees that the producer shall have the right to use and give publicity to the artist's name and likeness, photographic or otherwise, in connection with the distribution and exploitation of the picture hereinbefore mentioned, and to authorize distributors and exhibitors so to do. The producer shall have the exclusive right to the services of the artist during the term hereof, and the artist agrees that during the term hereof the artist will not render any services of any kind to or for any person, firm, or corporation other than the producer without first obtaining the express written consent of the producer. The producer shall have the right to photograph and reproduce any and all of the artist's acts, poses, plays, and appearances of any and all kinds during the term hereof, and to distribute and exploit the same, or any of them, in the photoplay hereinabove referred to and/or in any other photoplay and/or otherwise, so the producer may desire.

4. Where the services of the artist are required to be performed outside of the City of Los Angeles or its environs, the producer shall transport the artist and the reasonable personal baggage of the artist, and pay all necessary traveling expenses, including reasonable charges for board and lodging.

5. If the production of said photoplay be necessarily prevented, suspended, or postponed during the course of production, by reason of fire, accident, strike, riot, act of God, or of the public enemy, executive, or judicial order, no salary need be paid the artist for the first week's prevention, suspension, or postponement, or if prevented, suspended, or postponed by reason of the illness of any other member of the cast or of the director, full salary shall be paid the artist for the first week's prevention, suspension, or postponement; but it shall be the duty of the producer during said week to notify the artist in writing whether the producer will entirely discontinue the production or further suspend or postpone it; in the latter event the producer shall pay the artist half salary during such further suspended or postponed period. At the end of five (5) weeks from the date on which the producer has stopped production the artist may terminate this employment if the artist so elects, unless the producer continues thereafter to pay the artist full weekly compensation. In the event that said production is interrupted, suspended, or postponed, as hereinabove in this paragraph provided, then and in that event the producer may terminate this employment at any time after the commencement of such prevention, suspension, or postponement.

6. The artist agrees to furnish all modern wardrobe and wearing apparel necessary in the judgment of the producer for the portrayal of said character; it being agreed, however, that should so-called "character" or "period" costumes be required the producer shall supply the same. All costumes, wardrobe, and other property furnished by the producer shall belong to the producer and be returned promptly to it, and any loss or damage thereto arising through lack of due care on the part of the artist, or not necessarily arising through the performance of the artist's services, shall be paid for by the artist to the producer.

7. The producer may terminate the artist's employment at any time, either prior to the commencement of production of said photoplay or during the course of production; provided, however, that if the producer elect to terminate the artist's employment hereunder more than fifteen (15) days prior to the starting date hereinabove in paragraph 2 specified, then and in that event the producer shall be free from all liability of every kind whatsoever; but provided further that if the producer elect to terminate the artist's employment hereunder at any time within fifteen (15) days prior to said starting date, or at any time thereafter, or during the course of production of said photoplay, the producer shall be obligated to pay the artist such balance, if any, as is then unpaid for services theretofore rendered by the artist, and also one-half week's compensation, upon the payment of which the producer shall be discharged of and from all liability whatsoever hereunder. It is understood, of course, that should the producer elect to terminate the artist's employment hereunder, pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5 hereof, or by reason of illness on the part of the artist, then and in either of said events the producer shall not be obligated to pay any compensation whatsoever to the artist by reason of such termination.

8. If during the first or last week of the artist's employment hereunder the artist shall have actually appeared before the camera less than ~~seven (7)~~ full days, then the artist's salary for such week shall be pro-rated, and for this purpose one day's salary shall be ~~deducted~~ ^{deducted} of the weekly rate. If the services of the artist at the commencement of the time hereof are to be rendered at a place other than the producer's studio, the artist's compensation shall not begin to accrue to the artist until the artist first appears before the camera at such place, provided, however, that in any event compensation must commence to accrue to the artist not later than forty-eight (48) hours after such place has been reached. The compensation of the artist shall cease at the time of the last appearance of the artist before the camera in the picture at the place where the production is being made, and no salary shall be paid to the artist during the time required for the artist to return to Los Angeles, California, or the artist's place of residence. The producer shall not be required to pay the artist's salary during any period that the artist is incapacitated, by illness or otherwise, from performing the required services hereunder, and in the event of such illness or incapacity the producer, at its option, may terminate this employment without further liability.

Except for the purpose of pro-rating artist's salary as provided in the first sentence of paragraph 8 hereof, a week under the term of this contract shall be construed to consist of seven (7) days and artist shall not receive any extra compensation for Sunday, night or holiday work, should such work be deemed necessary in the judgment of the producer. Compensation to the artist hereunder shall be payable on completion of contract for services rendered up to and including the preceding.

9. All notices which the producer is required or may desire to give to the artist may be given either by mailing the same addressed to the artist at _____, or such notice may be given to the artist personally, either orally or in writing.

10. Wherever in this agreement the term "motion picture photoplay" or words of similar tenor are used, such words shall be conclusively deemed and construed to include, but not be limited to all forms of motion pictures produced and/or exhibited with or accompanied by sound and/or voice reproducing devices, radio, television devices and all other improvements and devices which are now, or may hereafter be used in connection with the production and/or exhibition of motion picture productions. The producer shall have the right to record and reproduce the artist's voice and all instrumental musical and other sound effects produced by the artist and others in connection with the artist's acts, poses, plays and appearances hereunder, and shall also have all rights of every kind and character in and to such recordings and reproductions. If after the completion of the customary photographing of said character the ordinary course of continuance production (either with or without sound or talking scenes or sequences) the producer should desire the services of the artist in connection with any sound or talking scenes or sequences, whether originally contemplated or not, then the provisions of paragraph 2 hereof relative to retakes, added scenes or changes shall govern the artist's employment in connection with such sound or talking scenes or sequences.

11. THE ARTIST MUST ADVISE THE PRODUCER EACH DAY AS TO WHERE THE ARTIST MAY BE REACHED BY PHONE AT ALL HOURS OF THE DAY AND NIGHT.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have executed this agreement the day and year first above written.

It is understood that we are to give the artist feature billing.

By _____
MASCOT PICTURES CORPORATION
Harry Langdon
(ARTIST)

Artist's residence address _____



Tor Johnson Remembered



Conrad Brooks snapped this photo back in 1955 — and shows it to you for the first time in the pages of *Cult Movies & Video*. Tor Johnson poses with Conrad's wife Ruth and young daughter Connie. From a barbecue where Tor was the master chef!

By Conrad Brooks

I first met Tor Johnson at the Ted Allen Studio in Hollywood. The year was 1955 and we were getting ready to start production on Ed Wood's *Bride Of The Monster*. I was set to play a part in the picture, and I was also helping Ed with production on the thing. That night I was there with a publicity agent; I was signing in the actors and we were going to get some advance promotion

on the picture out to the press. We were all waiting for Ed to show up. Tor Johnson was the first actor to arrive — and as I recall Ed never did show up that night.

But Tor Johnson made quite a first impression. First of all, he weighed over 360 pounds, a virtual mountain of a man. And that bald headed look was for real, not just for the movies. He

went around Hollywood that way. He wasn't bald, but he kept his head shaved ever since his days as a wrestler. And when you saw him, you knew he was not someone to tangle with. Not that he would want to set out to hurt anyone, but if you crossed him or cheated him — watch out!

Tor has played so many mute monsters, it must be hard for folks to think of him as a human being. But Tor was a real sweetheart of a guy, with a big heart. Even there at the studio when I first started talking to him, he began asking about my career, wondering if I was getting enough work, and giving me a bit of advice from his own experience in the business. Just a hell of a nice guy.

And he was a very outgoing character. He was a good conversationalist; on the movie set he would mingle with the crew people, the technicians, the other actors, and so forth. They always liked Tor, and so he would become the center of attention. He had a beautiful smile, and he loved being with people. Originally he was from Stockholm, he was very proud of his country, and he used to talk about how much he missed his European life. But he enjoyed making these movies.

And in the case of *Bride Of The Monster*, Tor was exceptionally happy. He'd appeared in small parts in other films, but to my knowledge *Bride Of The Monster* was the only time Tor appeared in a starring role where he got billing right at the top, along with Bela Lugosi. And that turned out to be Ed Wood's most professional, biggest budgeted films.

On the first day of shooting, I had a scene with Billy Benedict, who'd appeared in the old *Bowery Boys* films. But then problems arose, the money wasn't there to pay the actors, and the

guild came down and closed the picture. Ed had signed up with Screen Actors Guild, but it turned out there wasn't enough money in the company to pay the actors off at the end of the week. So when we showed up the second day, we were told that production was suspended. And it was kind of weird in a way. Every week in *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter* where they had listings of films currently filming, they would list our production under its working title, which was *Bride Of The Atom*, then it would say "Production Suspended" And this went on for eight or nine weeks.

Finally one of the actors in the movie, Tiny McCoy, got his dad to put up the money to finish the movie. Altogether it was five days of shooting — which took three months to complete.

After that movie I was invited out to Tor's house in the San Fernando Valley. Tor prepared a nice lunch. He was a talented chef, and from his size it's obvious that he loved good food. He had some secret recipes, and even wanted to open a chain of restaurants at one time. He liked Italian food and wanted to open a place called "King of Pizzas."

Later, after we did *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, I got to know Tor better. He introduced me to his wife Greta, a Swedish girl whom he had married in Europe. They came out to visit me and my wife Ruth at our house in Santa Monica. Tor was a charmer; he really took to my little daughter Connie, and said we should try to get her into the movies.

I remember that early in the day Tor and I went down to a little coffee shop about one block from the beach in Santa Monica. And three or four policemen were coming by and they waved and called out to Tor by name. They all knew him because his son Carl was an officer in the Los Angeles Police Department. The son was pretty well liked, and he had a celebrity dad, and Tor was



Scene from *Behind Locked Doors* (1948, Eagle Lions Films) finds a puzzled looking Tor with his hands full.

pretty recognizable where ever he went!

It was during this time that Tor and I became pretty good pals. He confided in me about his troubles with Greta, which came about mostly because of these movies we were making. She'd known him as a wrestler and a very unique, successful one. He'd gone to Bombay and wrestled the champion wrestler of India in an arena filled with 120,000 people. I think it was there that a newspaper reporter called him "the little angel," and so Tor took to billing himself as "the Swedish Angel." He toured under that name for years. Then to come to Hollywood and do those horror parts for Ed Wood — well, Greta thought it was foolish, and that Tor was wasting his time.

Now, Tor liked film work. He wanted to work more, but he was such a huge man, and how often does a film call for that big of a guy? Just like a lot of us, he was depending on Ed Wood to come up with more parts. Ed wanted to produce five or six pictures a year, and he was knocking out the scripts for these films, but he couldn't get the money together. If he had, I know he would have kept using his family of players, and that always included: Lugosi, Tom Keene, Tor Johnson, Lyle Talbot, and many others. There were a lot of us depending on Ed Wood in those days; Eddie tried hard and did what he could. The movies just didn't happen fast enough.

But as far as Tor was concerned, he enjoyed the work, but his wife urged him to quit completely. This led to some serious fights.

One time Tor called me and asked me to get together with him. He'd left home and checked in at the Harvey Hotel, and asked me if he could borrow some cash to pay the hotel bill. He said, "I don't want to live with Greta any more!" I know he didn't mean it, he was just angry for a while. But he did get an apartment in Hollywood and stayed away for a month or two. Eventually he and Greta got together again.

I understand Tor and his son also got into a few knock-down fights, which must have been something to see since Carl was also a big strong fellow in those days. Two Swedish Angels going for the throat!

Tor was a wheeler-dealer kind of guy when he needed money. For a while he was associated with a used car dealership. In fact, he told me to go out there and they'd give me a good deal on a car, and that's just what happened. I got a very nice car and they gave me a good price on it.

Later, Tor and I worked on another film together, *The Beast Of Yucca Flats*. Producer Coleman Francis ran into the same problems that Ed Wood had experienced. He started the film, then ran out of money before shooting was finished. He asked me if I could raise any money, and I did talk to Mr. Harold who had financed some projects. He took a look at the footage and did not advise putting any money toward this movie. Eventually, Tony Cardoza put up the money and the film was completed. I came in via that involvement, and ended up working just one day as an actor on the film. I was called out to the airport



Tor at his menacing best from *The Black Sleep*.



That's Tor at right with Raymond Burr and Jerry Lewis from the Martin & Lewis feature *You're Never Too Young* (Paramount, 1955).

in Saugus to shoot some scenes of a group watching Tor Johnson's plane land. Of course there's no airport out there now, it's all a small city that's sprung up there.

I've heard stories about the shooting, such as the one about Tor falling on actor Larry Aten, almost crushing him to death. I don't know if that happened or not; Larry was a skinny guy — he could probably be crushed fairly easily. A magazine also printed a story about Tor's weight preventing him from climbing to the top of a hill in the Mojave Desert where they did some shooting. The story goes that they had to hoist Tor up by pulley. This may be true, but Tor was a strong guy who could take care of himself. I think he could climb a hill if he had to.

The producers claimed that they spent \$24,000 on *The Beast Of Yucca Flats*. But like one of the critics at the time said, "Where'd that money go? It sure didn't show up on the screen." It

was shot silent, since it was cheaper to do single takes without sound, then fake a soundtrack after it was edited. The whole film isn't much more than Tor Johnson walking around in the desert. He looks uncomfortably hot in those scenes.

I understand Tor and his son also got into a few knock-down fights, which must have been something to see since Carl was also a big strong fellow in those days. Two Swedish Angels going for the throat!

After that, I didn't see Tor very often. That may have been his last film. Then one day, Ed Wood called me and told me that Tor had died. He'd had a heart attack, then I think he had another one in the hospital, and it was all over. Very few people knew about it, and I don't think that even Ed went to the funeral. That would have been partly due to Tor's wife again, since she might not have wanted to tell any of the movie

friends of Tor's. If they called, she often just hung up the phone on them.

Now, all these years later, Tor is becoming a cult hero at last. I've seen Tor Johnson masks, models, comic books, and posters available to the fans, and they all seem to be very popular. And this is understandable. Lugosi and Ed Wood were mysterious people about whom very little was known for a long while. But now there's quite a bit of information available on them, and a bit of the mystery has been revealed. But Tor is one of those identifiable movie figures whose entire life is virtually unrecorded; there have been very few biographical articles on him, and his personal life remains a mystery. More and more people are getting curious about solving this mystery. As the films get shown more, the people will get more interested. Someone just recently put *Beast Of Yucca Flats* out on video, and it's causing a lot of talk. Actually, it should be heralded as the world's worst film, rather than *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.

Several times a year I go back east to do conventions in Chicago, Baltimore



Tor on the make from *Journey To Freedom* (1957, Republic Pictures).

and New York. This past year, more and more people have started asking about Tor than ever before. It's very noticeable. I usually appear for a showing of *Glen Or Glenda?* or *Plan 9*, then come out and meet the fans and answer questions, or the people putting on the show give me a table and I autograph photos and gifts for the folks. Naturally, they always want to know about Lugosi. But during this past year, more and more of the people — many who are seeing these films for the first time — are wanting me to tell them about Tor. What was he really like?

Considering that he had no training as an actor, he did very well with the parts he was called on to perform. He left us with a character that is now becoming a cult favorite to many thousands of horror and science fiction fans.

And personally, he was a warm and personable individual, a loyal friend to his pals and fellow actors. He was a charmer, with a heart and a genuine smile as big as befits someone of his physical stature.

Tor has been gone a long time now. He was a good friend. I miss him very much.

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The Films Of Tor Johnson

by Buddy Barnett

Tor Johnson, wrestler, horror movie star and comic book hero, was born on October 19, 1903 in Sweden. His real name was Tor Johansson. Johansson became Johnson when Tor emigrated to the United States. Tor moved out to the Los Angeles area of California sometime in the early 1930s.

Because of his great size and weight (well over 350 pounds), Tor made an ideal wrestler. Early in his career, Tor wrestled under his own name. In the mid 1930s he fought under the name King Kong. By the early 1940s he started fighting under the monicker 'The Super Swedish Angel.' He kept this title until he retired from wrestling in 1957.

Sometime in the 1930s, Tor started to pick up bit parts in motion pictures. His first documented film appearance was in *Kid Millions* (Samuel Goldwyn, 1933) starring Eddie Cantor. Tor played the palace torturer in this musical fantasy. When not traveling the country as a wrestler, Tor played more bit parts throughout the 1930s and into the early 1950s, often appearing as a wrestler.

Tor had his first brush with horror movies in 1944 when he played a small part in the Olsen & Johnson horror comedy *Ghost Catchers* for Universal Pictures. Tor also appeared that year in the fantasy *The Canterville Ghost* at MGM with Charles Laughton. In 1948, Tor appeared in *Behind Locked Doors* for Eagle Lion as a maniac killer in an insane asylum. This was the first role that Tor had where he really made an impression on the audience. The film was reissued in the 1950s as *The Human Gorilla* to cash in on Tor's success as a horror star.

Tor also had bit parts in a few comedies like *Road To Rio* (Paramount, 1947), *The Lemon Drop Kid* (Paramount, 1951) both with Bob Hope; *Lost In A Harem* (MGM, 1944), *Abbott And Costello In The Foreign Legion* (Universal-International, 1950) both with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello; and *You're Never Too Young* (Paramount, 1955) with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. In 1952 Tor made a good impression in *Lady In The Iron Mask* at 20th Century Fox as a palace executioner.

In 1954 filmmaker Edward D. Wood, Jr. chose Tor Johnson to play the character Lobo opposite Bela Lugosi in *Bride Of The Monster* and a new horror star was born. Tor usually played pretty much the same role; a gigantic murderous zombie/monster. He went on to star in *The Black Sleep* (United Artists, 1956) with Bela Lugosi, Basil Rathbone, Lon Chaney and John Carradine; *Plan 9 From Outer Space* (DCA, 1958 filmed in late 1956) Edward D. Wood's masterpiece and what was to be Tor's most famous role as Inspector Clay, detective turned zombie; *The Unearthly* (Republic, 1957) with John Carradine and Allison Hayes, again as Lobo; and *Night Of The Ghouls* (Atomic Productions, 1958 unreleased until 1984) also for Edward D. Wood and Tor's last appearance as Lobo.

Tor's last film was *The Beast Of Yucca Flats* (Francis-Cardoza, 1961). According to Tor's co-star, Conrad Brooks, Tor had hit rock bottom with this feature. Tor was only paid \$300 for his starring role! After *Yucca*

Flats, Tor did a few television appearances, including *People's Court*, *The Red Skelton Show* and *Bonanza*. In 1965 he made a few personal appearances at supermarkets to promote the Tor Johnson monster mask created by Don Post Studios.

Tor developed a serious heart condition and was forced to retire. He passed away on May 12th, 1971. He was buried at Eternal Valley Memorial Park in Newhall, California.

Thanks to the popularity of *Plan 9* and many of his other movies (including, believe it or not, *The Beast Of Yucca Flats*), Tor is today more popular than ever before. He is featured in comic books, you can buy Tor Johnson monster models, Tor Johnson T Shirts, and the Don Post Tor Johnson monster mask is reported to be their best seller. Tor Johnson is a true cult movie star.

Tor Johnson Filmography

The following list is most likely incomplete. It would probably be next to impossible to compile an accurate listing of all the bit parts that Tor Johnson played in movies over the years.

1. *Kid Millions*. (Samuel Goldwyn, 1933) with Eddie Cantor.
2. *Man On The Flying Trapeze* (Paramount, 1935) with W. C. Fields.
3. *Under Two Flags* (20th Century Fox, 1936).
4. *Swing Out The Blues* (Columbia, 1943).
5. *The Canterville Ghost* (MGM, 1944).
6. *Lost In A Harem* (MGM, 1944) with Abbott and Costello.
7. *Ghost Catchers* (Universal, 1944).
8. *Sudan* (Universal, 1945).
9. *Road To Rio* (Paramount, 1947) with Bing Crosby and Bob Hope.
10. *State Of The Union* (MGM, 1948).
11. *Behind Locked Doors* (Eagle-Lion, 1948).
12. *Alias The Champ* (Republic, 1949).
13. *Abbott And Costello In The Foreign Legion* (Universal-International, 1950).
14. *The Reformer And The Redhead* (MGM, 1950).
15. *Dear Brat* (Paramount, 1951).
16. *The Lemon Drop Kid* (Paramount, 1951) with Bob Hope.
17. *The San Francisco Story* (Warner Brothers, 1952).
18. *Lady In The Iron Mask* (20th Century Fox, 1952).
19. *Houdini* (Paramount, 1953).
20. *Bride Of The Monster* (Banner, 1955) with Bela Lugosi.
21. *You're Never Too Young* (Paramount, 1955) with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis.
22. *The Black Sleep* (United Artists, 1956) with Basil Rathbone, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney and John Carradine.
23. *Carousel* (20th Century Fox, 1956).
24. *The Unearthly* (Republic, 1957) with John Carradine and Allison Hayes.
25. *Journey To Freedom* (Republic, 1957).
26. *Plan 9 From Outer Space* (DCA, 1958) with Bela Lugosi, Vampira, Lyle Talbot, Criswell and Conrad Brooks.
27. *Night Of The Ghouls* (Atomic Productions, 1959 unreleased) with Criswell, Kenne Duncan and Valda Hansen.
28. *The Beast Of Yucca Flats* (Francis-Cardoza, 1961) with Conrad Brooks.

THE FILMS OF ED WOOD: EXPLOITATION OR PROPAGANDA?

by Rudy Minger

Of all the people who've labored in exploitation films over the last 40 years, Ed Wood has proven himself to be one of the most enduring. It was once a commonly accepted viewpoint that the Wood films kept getting revived and re-revived because they were so enjoyably "bad". But those of us who actually watch the films cannot really say that. If sheer badness is the only criteria for seeing these films, there are plenty of them out there worse than anything Wood ever made. Take a look at such pictures as *Terrified!* (Crown International, 1963) or *Beast Of Yucca Flats* (Coleman Francis, 1961) and Ed Wood suddenly looks like Fellini.

For years I was told what a boring, unwatchable bomb *Sinister Urge* was. Imagine my surprise when I finally screened this last picture Wood directed and it turned out to be a perfectly competent little thriller, something that could have been released by any B-movie company.

Having at this point seen every major film Wood ever made (with the exception of *Jail Bait*) I have come to the conclusion that a well-organized, massive conspiracy has been actively working toward discrediting both Wood and his films. Many are involved in this conspiracy: hoity-toity film buffs who slobber over pretentious pictures that Wood would've disowned if he'd made them; pop-culture writers with an axe to grind toward anything that doesn't fit their conceptions of what a picture "should" be like; roving entrepreneurs whose continued fat bank accounts depend heavily on promoting the myth of Wood's "badness"; writers looking for good copy. The list is endless.

I submit that Wood's films are a threat to the established order. They contain ideas that are shockingly radical for their time, and for ours. For years, these films played only at the sleaziest theatres imaginable, to audiences who could not have possibly grasped the concepts that Wood was setting forth. When the films were sold to television, they ran only at 3 A. M. or in afternoon kiddie show slots.

When Wood was "discovered" — for all the wrong reasons — the powers that be realized that the only way to keep his ideas from being taken seriously was to thoroughly discredit both the films and the man. No one writes in-depth studies on Larry Buchanan or Ray Dennis Steckler, holding their private lives up to public display and ripping them apart. No one needs to. The Buchanan and Steckler films are for the most part harmless fluff.



Rare production shot from *Glen Or Glenda?* shows Bela Lugosi, producer George Weiss and cameraman William C. Thompson.

A thorough examination of Wood's output shows that he was much less interested in making "good" films than he was in using the power of film to communicate ideas.

Glen Or Glenda?, Wood's 1952 debut, is essentially a plea for tolerance; for transvestites and, by extension, for anyone perceived by society at large to be "different". Wood must have known that the film would do business regardless of what was in it. He had plenty of practical experience in film and television production, having worked at it since 1948. He could've made a much more conventional film had he wanted to. He didn't. Why?

In *Bride Of The Monster* (1956) there is a sequence that has absolutely nothing to do with the plot in what is otherwise probably Wood's most conventional film. About a third of the way into the film two policemen discuss the eeriness of the marsh they're in. One of them remarks, "Maybe it's true what the papers say — all these atom bomb tests are affecting the weather." This was not the kind of thing the U.S. Government wanted to hear. Silly stories about giant insects created by radiation were okay — even children knew that couldn't really happen. But to suggest that our government was playing games with our lives — even in passing — was a definite no-no.

Plan 9 From Outer Space (1958) is Wood's most famous movie, and his most ridiculed. By an interesting coincidence, it is also the one with the least respect for established authority. The authority figures on both sides are presented as pompous buffoons; and as Danny Peary has bravely pointed out, there are hints throughout the movie that our government routinely covers up what's really going on. Even the policemen in the film are so inept that they don't even

solve the grave robberies. (There are five Wood films in which policemen play major roles. There isn't a single one in which the cops do their job properly.) And as a conspiracy movie, *Plan 9* is just as plausible as *JFK* — which, by yet another interesting coincidence is also being attacked by the film critics with a venom way beyond what such a supposedly trivial picture should merit.

For years, it's been said that *Night Of The Ghouls* (1958) went unreleased for over 20 years because Wood couldn't pay the lab bill. Yet there were trial showings. How did Wood get ahold of a print? Could it be possible that both the East L. A. Police Department and a number of fraudulent spiritualists whose tricks were exposed in the film took steps to pressure the right people into keeping it unreleased? Is it yet another odd coincidence that the L.A.P.D. finally began a massive crackdown on spiritualists after this film managed to make it to video?

Which brings us to *The Sinister Urge* (1961). This was Ed Wood's swan song as a director, in which he pulled one last trick on the existing order, a rather ingenious one. By making a film that was ostensibly "against" pornography, he managed to get more sex, violence and nudity past the censorship boards that then controlled motion pictures than he ever could've making a less "acceptable" film.

And there you have it. The unquestionable evidence stands before you, the readers, in black and white. I have presented my case; can you say it didn't happen? Only you can be the judge.

.....

ABOMINATION, THE (1990) Good gore effects in this lame movie!
ALIEN DEAD, THE (1981) Classic Fred Olen Ray epic!
ALIEN PRIVATE EYE (1990) Cheesy sci-fi action disco stinker!
AN AMERICAN SCREAM (1989) Blackie Dammett stars!
ATTACK OF THE KILLER REFRIGERATOR (1991) 'Nuff said!
BASIC HOW-TO HALLOWEEN MAKEUPS VOL. ONE (1991) Fun for kids!
BASIC HOW-TO HALLOWEEN MAKEUPS VOL. TWO (1992) Ten all-new makeups!
BEASTIES (1991) Space creatures attack naked babes and punk rockers!
BELA LUGOSI: THEN AND NOW (1991) The definitive documentary on "Dracula!"
BLACK CRYSTAL, THE (1991) Schlocky occult chiller!
BODY PARTS (1990) Dead strippers are turning up at a nightclub!
CANNIBAL CAMPOUT (1989) Shot-on-video gore. Hot seller!
CAT IN THE CAGE (1978) Starring Sybil Danning and Mel Novak!
CHICKBOXER (1992) Teenagers vs. thugs comedy! Michelle Bauer guest-stars!
CHILLERS (1988) Southern trilogy of terrors!
CHRISTMAS EVIL (1983) Brandon Maggart and Dianne Hull star!
CREEPOZIDS (1987) Linnea and porn star Ashley Gere get eaten alive!
CULT PEOPLE (1990) Really neat documentary of directors, stars, etc.!
CURSE OF THE QUEERWOLF (1989) Cult Super-8mm director Mark Pirro classic!
DEADBEAT BY DAWN (1989) Cult director Jim VanBebber's classic!
DEAD GIRLS (1990) Rock n' roll chicks get naked and die!
DEATH COLLECTOR (1990) Scream Queen Ruth Collins stars in this schlocker!
DEMON HUNTER (1989) Kenny Rogers' wife stars!
DISCIPLE OF DEATH (1972) British horror flick starring Ronald Lacey!
EVIL BELOW, THE (1989) South African underwater chiller!
GALACTIC GIGOLO (1987) Ruth Collins stars in this alien sex romp!
GALAXY OF THE DINOSAURS (1992) Awesome animation in this sci-fi comedy!
GAME OF SURVIVAL (1989) Super-8mm sci-fi action flick!
GHOUL SCHOOL (1990) Joe Franklin stars. Made in New Jersey!
GORE-MET ZOMBIE CHEF FROM HELL (1988) Lotsa stupid gore!
HAUNTS (1977) Cameron Mitchell and Aldo Ray star!
HE LIVES: THE SEARCH FOR THE EVIL ONE (1988) Shlocky Camp Video!
HELLBENT (1990) A trip to Hell on the road to fame!
HELL SPA (1991) It's exactly what it sounds like!
HIGHWAY TO HELL (1991) Made in Texas slasher flick!
HOLLYWOOD'S NEW BLOOD (1989) Teen slice-and-dice gore flick!
HORRORS OF THE RED PLANET (1964) Retitled Wizard of Mars! John Carradine stars!
HUMANIDS FROM ATLANTIS (1992) Rising from their watery graves!
INVASION FROM INNER EARTH (1977) Directed by Bill Rebane!
JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF TIME (1967) Scott Brady stars!
KINGDOM OF THE VAMPIRE (1991) Vampire epic from creator of *The Dead Next Door*!
LINNEA QUIGLEY'S HORROR WORKOUT (1990) Lotsa T&A and gore!
MAXIMUM IMPACT (1992) Revenge has a new name! J.R. Bookwalter directs!
MILPITAS MONSTER, THE (1975) Classic shlocky horror!
MONSTER MAKEUP (1990) Dick Smith hosts this how-to makeup epic!
MONSTERS AND MANIACS (1990) Brinke Stevens hosts this 2-hour doc!
MOUNTAIN FURY (1991) Shot-on-video backwoods thriller!
MURDER WEAPON (1989) Linnea Quigley gets naked and kills lotsa guys!
NIGHT OF HORROR (1980) Made in Baltimore shlock!
ON THE TRAIL OF ED WOOD (1991) Conrad Brooks hosts this documentary!
PIECES OF DARKNESS (1988) Horror trilogy!
REANIMATOR ACADEMY (1992) Readin', writin' and reanimatin'!
REDNECK COUNTY FEVER (1992) Moonshine-swillin', truck-drivin' fun!
RETURN OF THE FAMILY MAN (1990) Horror in the tradition of *The Stepfather*!
ROBOT NINJA (1989) Burt Ward and Linnea Quigley star in this Ohio gorefest!
ROLLERBLADE WARRIORS: TAKEN BY FORCE (1990) Liz Kaitan & Kathleen Kinmont star!
SHE-WOLF (1980) Hot babe by day, freak wolf chick by night!
SHOCK CINEMA VOL. ONE (1990) Doc hosted by Brinke Stevens!
SHOCK CINEMA VOL. TWO (1990) Popular series with Brinke continues!
SHOCK CINEMA VOL. THREE (1991) Bloopers, Babes and Blood!
SHOCK CINEMA VOL. FOUR (1991) B-Movie Makeup FX! With Linnea!
SKID KID, THE (1991) Super-duper Super-8mm superhero flick! Missouri-lensed!
SKINNED ALIVE (1990) Scott Spiegel of *Evil Dead 2* fame stars!
SLASHDANCE (1990) Babes dance and get slashed!
SLAVE GIRLS FROM BEYOND INFINITY (1987) Liz Kaitan gets naked!
THEY CAME FROM FANDOM (1991) Interviews with Joe Dante and more!
VAMPYRE (1990) East Coast schlocky vampire flick!
WEIRDO, THE (1990) Cult director Andy Milligan directs!
WOODCHIPPER MASSACRE (1990) Shot-on-video schlocker! A must-have!
ZOMBIE COP (1991) Cops and voodoo combine in this action-packed thriller!

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Interview: Mark Carducci

CM: Tell us about your background in film.

MARK CARDUCCI: I attended NYU Film School. As a child I was pretty much exclusively interested in horror, fantasy and science-fiction films. I grew up on magazines like *Famous Monsters Of Filmland*. But as I got older, my interests widened to include the work of Welles, Kubrick, Altman, Polanski and other mainstream filmmakers. And, like a lot of kids in fandom, I wanted to make my own films, so I got hold of an 8mm, then a Super 8, then a 16mm camera and directed numerous short films. Professionally, I've been writing screenplays for about the last 10 years. In the intervening years between film school and screenwriting I wrote quite a bit of film journalism. I contributed to periodicals such as the old *The Monster Times*, Fred Clarke's *Cinefantastique*, as well as to mainstream publications like *Millimeter*. For *Millimeter* I did an interview with director Michael Cimino on the set of *The Deerhunter*. I also interviewed Walter Hill, Paul Schrader and other writer-directors.

For *The Monster Times*, I interviewed Vincent Price on the set of *Theatre Of Blood*, in London. This was my very first interview and it was kind of nerve wracking. I hadn't done much preparation, and it was kind of learn-as-you-go for me at that point. I sat down with Vincent Price in this dilapidated old theatre they were using as a set. He was wearing his Shylock costume for the "Merchant of Venice" sequences. And I asked him the most hackneyed question in the world: "Mr. Price, can you tell us how you got your start in the film business?" And he said, "My God, you can find that out anywhere!" I replied, "Well, uh, gee...can you tell us anyway?" And he did; he was very gracious (and I was very grateful). That taught me to do a lot of research before I interviewed anybody. After that, I'd go to a library and find out everything I could about the person and their work, not only to avoid duplicating other interviewers questions, but for background to formulate better questions.

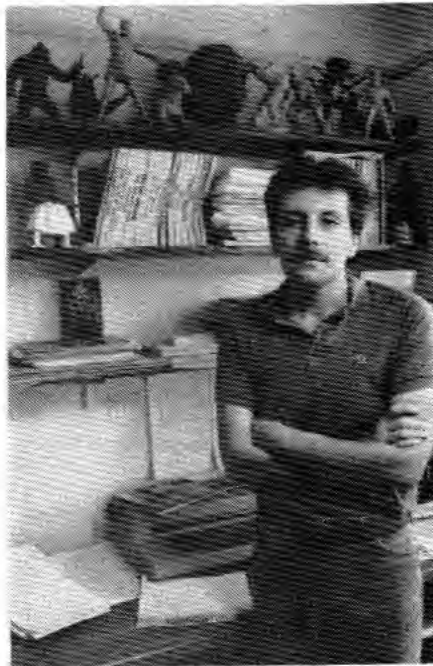
CM: Have you directed any features?

CARDUCCI: No. I'd like to direct features at some point. But after film school I wasn't interested in pursuing the arduous and risky route of raising money to make a low budget film. I felt, instead, that if I could establish myself in Hollywood as a screenwriter, then perhaps I could make the jump from writing films to getting a shot at directing a script I'd written. That's a goal I continue to pursue.

CM: I suppose I could look this up at the library, but what were some of your earliest credits?

CARDUCCI: The first produced was a bit embarrassing, but everyone has to start

somewhere. To tell you the truth, I don't like to talk about that particular film. I started out writing for independent producers in New York. I suppose the most exciting thing that's happened, and the film that I'm proudest of, is *Pumpkinhead*. Richard Weinman, Billy Blake and Howard Smith were the producers. They'd produced *The Night The Lights Went Out In Georgia* and *Rhinestone*. They had hired me a few years earlier on something that didn't get made. Bill Blake had been the publisher of *Millimeter*, that's how I knew him. The three of them approached me with this project. They had the title and a number of lines of children's verse, "Oh beware of Pumpkinhead, he'll get you blah-blah-blah..." I'm trying to remember all of it. "Bolted doors and windows barred, Guard dogs prowling in the yard, Won't protect



Screenwriter Mark Carducci, creator of *Pumpkinhead* and *Flying Saucers On The White House Lawn*, in his office, about to write another horror masterpiece

you in your bed. Nothing will from Pumpkinhead." Something like that. It was actually just a piece about a kind of bogeyman, it told no story. And they wanted to generate a low budget "slasher" film from it. I wasn't interested in writing a "slasher" film at all. But I did have a long-standing interest in the South, in rural myths. I'd lived in Georgia for a year when I was 10 years old. And the title

Pumpkinhead evoked, for me, a sense of backwoods, of Appalachia; the settings of movies like *Deliverance* and *Southern Comfort*. I'd not known very many horror films to make use of that kind of milieu. The more I thought about it, the more the idea of creating a creature out of mountain witchcraft, out of the mists of rural myth, attracted me.

I have a friend whom I've known since I was about 16, named Gary Gerani. He wrote the book *Fantastic Television* and created the Topps bubblegum card series *Dinosaur Attacks*, as well as the Eclipse Comics graphic novel based on the cards. When the producers called me about *Pumpkinhead*, it just struck me as something that Gary and I might work well together on. So we did an outline, then a script. The producers shopped the script. And within a short period of time — about eight weeks — New World, New Line, DeLaurentis and Cannon all expressed interest in doing the movie. There were no real majors to speak of, but DEG, a "mini-major" at the time, seemed open to the biggest budget so the producers went with them.

After DEG greenlighted the project, Stan Winston was contacted about doing the creature effects and shot back that he'd like to direct it; and that he'd do the effects for a lot less money if he could direct it. He was approved and the movie got made. There were a whole series of difficulties after that, what with DEG going under and the film's release being held up. But, finally, it was sold to MGM/UA and was released. It wound up earning 5 million dollars theatrically and selling over 100,000 copies on videotape. So it's performed very well, and Gary and I are very happy with it.

CM: Are you receiving a part of those earnings?

CARDUCCI: No, sadly we aren't, due to the financial collapse of DEG and the long list of creditors. But there is one bright bit of news. Dark Horse comics has just struck a deal with MGM/UA for the comic book rights to *Pumpkinhead*, and Gary and I will be writing the book. My understanding is that the comic will be a four-part series, and that the first issue will hit the stands this coming Halloween. We have lots of ideas for expanding and elaborating upon our *Pumpkinhead* mythos, for delving into the history of *Pumpkinhead* invocations throughout the centuries. Where did the first *Pumpkinhead* husks come from? How were they distributed to practitioners of the Black Arts throughout the world? There'll be plenty of action.

Additionally, Gary and I have written a treatment for a *Pumpkinhead* sequel, which the producers are trying to set up. Maybe down the line that will get made. From what I can gather,



Pumpkinhead is the film that Carducci is most proud of, so far.

Pumpkinhead is a very popular monster with fans. I believe there are as many as six different model kits of him out there; one fully licensed and five garage kits. The official one is the best, put out by Geometric and sculpted by Randy Bowen. It's really beautifully done.

CM: What else have you written?

CARDUCCI: I wrote a screenplay for *Child's Play II*, which was not the one filmed. MGM/UA had Don Mancini, the original writer of the first film, come up with a draft, and they commissioned me to do a completely different draft. It was a close decision. David Kerschner, the producer, said he was happy with both scripts and would have been happy to make either one. But U.A. ended up going with Don's. Mine was actually much scarier than Don's. His was very campy and funny, whereas mine was darker. It had some good one-liners from Chuckie, which I understand is a prerequisite. But it was genuinely scary, because that's the kind of horror film I prefer.

I also wrote a *Tales From The Darkside* episode, called "The Spirit Photographer". It's about a man trying to take a perfect, irrefutable picture of a ghost, moving into a haunted house in order to do so. Currently, I'm writing a spec script about Halloween. It's not a horror film, I want to stress that. It's about what Halloween and trick-or-treat means to kids when they're little. Ideally, what *Miracle On 34th Street* was to Christmas, I'd like this to be to Halloween. We'll see.

CM: And amidst all this activity, now you're writing, producing and directing your own documentary, *Flying Saucers Over Hollywood: The Plan 9 Companion*. Isn't this an all new field for you?

CARDUCCI: The notion of documentary as a filmmaking form is something I've always been attracted to. I had tried, while a junior at NYU, to make a documentary about Stanley Kubrick. *Barry Lyndon* hadn't come out yet and Kubrick was born in the Bronx, so I was going to call it *Stanley Kubrick: From The Bronx To Barry Lyndon And Beyond*. This was at a period when I was doing the film journalism, and that had given me a background in reportage which helped me understand the documentary process. Film and video documentaries are essentially reportage, not all that unlike print reportage. There's an overlap there.

On the Kubrick thing, I'd contacted so many people: Slim Pickens, Alex North, John Alcott,

and others who'd worked with Kubrick. But I couldn't afford to finance the film. My research wound up in a long feature article for *Millimeter*, called "In Search of Stanley K."

But as to the *Plan 9* documentary: it came about as the direct result of a party I gave at my house. Forry Ackerman is a friend, and his assistant, Lee Harris, is also a friend. Someone who's actually working on the documentary, Sean Fernald (who is a video editor and also head of Rock Video Promotion for Capital Records), had gotten hold of a t-shirt with a Criswell prediction on it. It predicted that flying saucers would land on the White House lawn on May 6, 1991. Sean sent Forry a fax of this t-shirt front. Lee thought it was a riot. Together we hatched the idea of a *Plan 9* party, to be held on that date, May 6, 1991. So we showed the laser disc of *Plan 9* and a number of people who worked on the film happened to hear about it and showed up — Conrad Brooks, Harry Thomas (who did the makeup)... Buddy Barnett from *Cult Movies* was there; I think he and his friends had brought Conrad to the party. Forry came, too. Now, there's a group of L.A. horror fans who are friends of Forry's. He's dubbed them "The Bat Pack." They include Glen Phipps, Joe Moe, Lee Harris, William Davis, Brian Forbes and others. They attended, too. Lee had even gone to the cemetery where Tor Johnson is buried and shot video of his grave. And (this will sound morbid, but it was all done in fun and out of real love) he also took rubbings off of Tor's marker and we gave them out as party favors. So it was this hardcore *Plan 9*/Ed Wood fan party. We videotaped the party. And a few weeks later, Lee and I were watching the tape of the party, which had turned out to be a very interesting event. Conrad and Harry had begun reflecting on how the film had gotten produced, and what went on afterward. And it was just a simultaneous thing: Lee and I both hit upon the notion of fleshing out these reminiscences in a thorough and professional manner, in a documentary dedicated to everything one ever wanted to know about *Plan 9 From Outer Space* but didn't know who to ask. *Plan 9* is, after all, Ed Wood's *Citizen Kane*. If we could gather enough information from people, try and unearth rare film footage and stills, etc, it could be very entertaining. There and then we said, "Let's try to do this."

At that point I did a little research on budgeting a project of this type — learning from similar tapes how much money to spend before one would be spending too much to recoup one's investment safely. I watched what other tapes aimed at the cult market were doing, and based our budget on a worst-case scenario. Even so, the money allotted was enough to do a slick and professional job, because everyone working on the project is a pro in their respective field, a rabid *Plan 9* fan and agreed to work for very little up front. Glen Phipps, who was at the party, was the videographer. Sean Fernald is the editor. Joe Moe and his partner Mark Doten, of the band McCorps, have done some remarkable music scoring, re-orchestrating the main themes from *Plan 9*.

When we dove head first into this, we knew we wanted to deliver to *Plan 9* fans the best and most complete presentation that we could. To that end, we struck an arrangement for clip rights to *Plan 9* from the copyright

holder, Wade Williams. Wade's source material on *Plan 9* is the best in the world. The laser disc, made from a print provided to Image by Wade, is nothing short of amazing for a film we're all used to seeing in grainy, dupey form. The richness of the blacks and whites and the clarity are much more beautiful than anything ever seen before on *Plan 9*. We're fully licensed from Wade for use of film clips from *Plan 9*.

We also brought in author Rudolph Grey, Ed Wood's biographer of *Nightmare of Ecstasy: The Life and Art of Edward D. Wood Jr.* fame. We asked for his participation and he became our creative consultant, insuring the accuracy of what we did. So, with Lee Harris (who is a voice actor as well as Forry Ackerman's assistant), I launched into *The Plan 9 Companion*. Lee is co-producing, collaborating on the script and doing the narration.

CM: What was it like interviewing the cast and crew from *Plan 9*?

CARDUCCI: Strange, enlightening, and fun. Milla Nurmi, also known as Vampira, was fantastic, although it was initially hard to reach her. That's one area where Rudy Grey was extremely helpful when we were in pre-production; reaching some of the Ed Wood players. Vampira has no telephone. Not because she's anti-social; I don't really know the reason. But she's a very cordial, very socialized, articulate, earthy intelligent woman.

Some of the time we interviewed people at their home. We spoke to Eric Caidin at his store, Hollywood Book and Poster, asking him about *Plan 9* and Ed Wood paper collectibles. As luck would have it, Bela Lugosi's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame is just across the street from Eric's.

At other times we interviewed people on a small set we put up, for which we'd enlarged the Drew Friedman box art for our project, and also displayed an original *Plan 9* one-sheet borrowed from famed collector Ron Borst. We had a comfortable chair and end table and Vampira, Paul Marco and others sat in front of these posters recounting *Plan 9*'s production history.

CM: Did Vampira enjoy being interviewed?

CARDUCCI: I think so, yes. And as a matter of fact, something quite memorable happened while we were talking to her. When I told Forry Ackerman that we were going to be seeing her, Forry said, "Gee, I haven't spoken to her in almost 35 years. I used to go to parties at her house, but then we just dropped out of touch." He wanted to come over to my place prior to Vampira arriving and hide. Then, while we

(continued)



Forry Ackerman and Tor Johnson get together to promote the Tor Don Post mask, which is still their largest seller.

Plan 9 is, after all, Ed Wood's Citizen Kane. If we could gather enough information from people, try and unearth rare film footage and stills, etc, it could be very entertaining. There and then we said, "Let's try to do this."

were talking to Vampira he'd say, "Maila Nurmi, this is your life! This is a voice you haven't heard in 35 years..." And so on. And we did it, and what we got on-camera was a historic reunion of Forry Ackerman and Vampira. Forry himself appears as an interviewee in the documentary, for two reasons. Forry owns one of the capes Lugosi wears in *Plan 9*. Essentially, he owns the sole known surviving prop from *Plan 9*. And secondarily — and this has not been known until now — Forry was Ed Wood's literary agent in the late 1940's and very early 50's. Forry's been an agent over the years for such Sci-Fi literary greats as Ray Bradbury and Isaac Asimov and Charles Beaumont. He still represents A. E. Van Vogt, as well as the estates of A. Merrit, the Grand Dean of Sci-Fi illustration, Frank R. Paul and others from the pulp era. He struggled to sell Ed Wood's mystery and suspense stories.

CM: How many did he sell for Ed?

CARDUCCI: He wasn't able to sell a single story, unfortunately. Forry said there were a lot of typos and misspellings in them. Ed was apparently just getting started as a writer and his early efforts weren't saleable. And this apparently frustrated Ed, because he'd phone Forry late at night, possibly a little bombed, and be crying, "What's going on with my stories?" Forry still has a number of the original manuscripts in boxes somewhere in the house. We've been trying to find them, but for the present they're adrift in his massive collection.

CM: Who else did you contact for the video?

CARDUCCI: We've conducted over 30 interviews with people either in *Plan 9* or who had or have some relevance to the film. Dr. Tom Mason's widow, A. C. Stevens (prod./dir. *Orgy Of The Dead*), Valda Hansen (The White Ghost from *Night Of The Ghouls*), Carl Anthony (one of the uniformed cops in *Plan 9*), director Joe Dante, Paul "Kelton The Cop" Marco, Conrad Brooks, Harry Thomas and many others. Greg Wolcott was a prince. At one time he wasn't all that happy about talking about having been in the film. But his feelings have mellowed. I think his children have gotten him to appreciate the qualities in *Plan 9* that he would understandably have missed, being right in the center of it at one time. He told us many wonderful stories about Ed Wood, and about shooting *Plan 9* at Quality Studios.

Beyond documenting *Plan 9*'s production history, one of *The Plan 9 Companion*'s goals is also to show *Plan 9*'s ripple effect through popular culture. To that end, among other things, we had Sam Raimi, director of *Evil Dead* and *Darkman*, and Scott Spiegle, co-writer of *Evil Dead II* and *The Rookie*, recreate their impression of Tor Johnson's appearance on Groucho Marx's "You Bet Your Life" program. We went up to the cutting room on *Army Of Darkness* (*Evil Dead III*) and Sam and Scott did the routine for us. It's one of the funniest things in the whole video.

We make mention of the various strange places *Plan 9* has reared its head, such as "The Jerry Seinfeld Show". We found a producer named Greg Sims, who has a *Plan 9* license plate on his car. Greg's done several films, including *To Die For* and *Red Surf*.

is, he screens it for his class as an example of what not to do. Working on this project, I've seen how sensitive some *Plan 9* fans are about the way one talks about the film. As if there were but one way to enjoy the movie. I'm personally not in agreement with the Medved mentality, which names *Plan 9* the Worst Film of All Time, but I do have a live and let live attitude toward the way fans appreciate Ed Wood's masterwork. There are many *Plan 9* fans who sincerely, and with love, feel *Plan 9* is the worst; it's part of the fun of liking the film for them. Who am I to dictate their feelings, even though I may not agree?

CM: Do you avoid using that catch-phrase, Worst Film of All Time?

CARDUCCI: Yes. We do deal with the mini-controversy of the split among fans over this issue, so we do make mention of it. But we certainly will not refer to *Plan 9* as the Worst Film of All Time, either editorially or, especially, in our advertising. It would be easy to do that and it would probably increase sales among the general audience, but we are simply not going to do that.

One thing I have to say about all this is that when an A studio picture is made and isn't all that good (maybe it has a silly story, flat direction or whatever), many critics will let it off the hook if it has just one saving grace in it for them by calling it "entertaining." Why is it that only A movies with famous casts or big budgets are forgiven their sins in this way. No one dismisses them. I feel that low-budget films ought to be allowed the same loophole to slip through, so to speak. If a film is technically flawed, has problematic special effects and a number of gaffes, as *Plan 9* does, yet still works on an audience in some strong way, and therefore is entertaining, then that should be more than enough to keep that film from being labeled as the worst. When you've got something that's stifferly dull, like *The Creeping Terror*, where there is absolutely no sense of artistic force behind it, with no suggestion in its tone that the filmmaker was at least trying to do his best, call that film the worst. We interviewed Harry Medved all about this. And, you know something, in the final analysis the Golden Turkeys are significantly responsible for *Plan 9*'s notoriety today. It's a double-edged sword, that notoriety, for sure. But it did bring about a major rediscovery of the film. Now, we just have to re-educate a portion of those fans.

CM: You spoke earlier about the ripple effect of *Plan 9*. Granted that there's often a fine line between inspiration and outright imitation, the subject has come up several times; that *Night Of The Living Dead* was inspired by, or borrowed a lot from *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. Is there much validity in that notion?

CARDUCCI: For me, beyond the obvious cemetery setting of each picture, the fact that they're both in black & white, perhaps certain movements of

Terry Black is the brother of Shane Black, who wrote *Lethal Weapon*. Terry is a screenwriter as well. He wrote *Dead Heat* and several *Tales From The Crypt* episodes. And Terry teaches screenwriting. Now, I'm not saying I whole-heartedly agree with the use he makes of *Plan 9*, but what he does

the revived dead, there doesn't seem to be much other similarity. Maybe I'm forgetting something. There doesn't seem to be a lot of plot similarity. The re-animation of the dead in *Night Of The Living Dead* is not the result of aliens coming to the planet in order to create an army to take us over — it's the result of some meteor passing over. It's never too specific in *Living Dead*. I see marginal similarities only because the dead are brought back to life. Beyond that meteor there's no science-fiction feel to *Living Dead* at all. Whereas, *Plan 9* is that fairly unique thing in the genre, a blend of horror and science-fiction. Mario Bava's *Planet Of The Vampires* is that; so is Tobe Hooper's film based on the Colin Wilson novel *Space Vampires* (*Life Force*).

Plan 9 may be the first film to show a corpse rising from the grave. That's Tor Johnson. And it's almost certainly the first science-fiction film to show a Mother-Ship on-screen. Mother-Ships were a common concept in 30's pulp literature, and Spielberg uses one in *Close Encounters* of course, and there are a few other examples, but I think *Plan 9* may be the first.

CM: Was *Plan 9* intended to tell its story entirely at night?

CARDUCCI: No. It is supposed to take place largely at night, though. But there's that inconsistency of scenes that were shot during the day and meant to be darkened for a night effect so they could be cut into night scenes in the picture. So there's that hallucinatory inter-cutting *Plan 9* is famous for, which makes for an unintentionally surreal effect. There are some who say Ed Wood may have intended that weird mixing of the day and night shots. We'll never know, I suppose, but I seriously doubt it.

CM: Did you find any new voice or film recordings of Ed Wood?

CARDUCCI: No voice recordings so far, no. But we're still checking a few things. But in terms of rare film footage, we acquired some 8mm color home movies of Ed Wood from Valda Hansen, the female lead in *Night Of The Ghouls*. These show Ed, Valda, Valda's mother and Ed's dog Monster. This footage is from the early 60's. We've also uncovered something even more rare — actual 16mm footage of Ed Wood on the set, actually directing a short film with actor Conrad Brooks in 1947. This is the only known footage of Ed Wood making a film.

Getting ahold of that footage was wonderful, but there have been a few frustrations during the production of this video. For instance, we made contact with Tor Johnson's grandson, who's name is also Tor. Karl Johnson, Tor's son, who appears in *Plan 9*, now lives in Tucson. And our hope was to interview the son and grandson of Tor together. The grandson had several times agreed to arrange for the interview and we were fully prepared to go to Tucson, but Tor kept dropping out of touch at the last minute, not getting back to me to let me

Plan 9 may be the first film to show a corpse rising from the grave. That's Tor Johnson. And it's almost certainly the first science-fiction film to show a Mother-Ship on-screen. Mother-Ships were a common concept in 30's pulp literature, and Spielberg uses one in Close Encounters of course, and there are a few other examples, but I think Plan 9 may be the first.

know where things stood. I believe he was going through some family difficulties at the time. I regret that the interviews never happened. I suppose it does leave room for a follow-up video all about Tor.

The other disappointment was that Ed Wood's wife Kathy was not willing to talk to us. She's grown very suspicious of people wanting her to talk about Ed, only to see the final product make fun of him. A British team produced a documentary about Ed, and Kathy participated in it. The tone turned out to be very condescending and jokey. They spent as much time as they could making fun of Ed Wood's cross-dressing and basically painted him as a freak. It had a few interesting revelations in it, but the overall attitude of the piece was fairly insulting. Unfortunately, we were not able to convince Kathy Wood of our sincerity, either via letters or through Rudy Grey. *The Plan 9 Companion* will assuredly have its fun moments, such as the inclusion of Sam Raimi's Tor on Groucho bit, but our overall tone will be that of a serious documentary. I'm an admirer of such documentary filmmakers as the Mayles, Les Blank, and Ken Burns. And one of the strongest motivations for us making this documentary is that I've always been fascinated by the process of filmmaking. And I've always been just as interested in how low budget films got made as in how high budget films got made. For the last 10 or 15 years, low budget genre filmmaking has been fairly well documented, thanks to magazines like *Famous Monsters* and *Fangoria*. But in the 1930's, 40's and 50's, B moviemaking was a topic there was very little publicity on and information on. So I see *The Plan 9 Companion* as, hopefully securing a little piece of that under-documented fringe film history.

You know, there's a marvelous documen-

tary on the making of *Gone With The Wind*. Obviously, our project will not be able to compare, at least in part because so little visual material relevant to the making of *Plan 9* has survived. There were very few behind-the-scenes stills taken during shooting — perhaps less than half-a-dozen! No film that we know of was shot behind-the-scenes. Many of the folks who worked on the film are no longer with us. So we've tried to bring as much material together as we could to reconstruct as much of *Plan 9*'s production history as we could.

We interviewed Don Post Jr. and Verne Langdon, and they told us about the day Tor Johnson came down to Don Post Studios to have his life mask taken. The Tor Johnson Mask issued by Don Post became the first real *Plan 9*-related piece of merchandising on the market. Don Jr. told us that over the years the Tor mask has been their hands-down best selling mask, selling more than Frankenstein, the Wolf Man and all the other monster masks. More even than the Star Wars masks. You often see Tor masks on people at sporting events. You'll go to a ball game at Dodger Stadium and there's usually a Tor-head in the crowd. The wearers may not know exactly who Tor is — they just know it's the bald monster.

I must tell you Mike, I'm very grateful for this chance to be able to talk about the production of our video. I know a lot of people read *Cult Movies* and this will really help spread the word.

CM: It's our pleasure. What other projects could we mention?

CARDUCCI: If I have the time this year, there is another project I'd like to release on videotape. It's just a short film, but a very unusual item. In 1953, Forry Ackerman was in a film he made with writer Fritz Lieber and Bjo Trimble. Bjo was the girl who saved *Star Trek*

with her letter writing campaign in the late 60's. Had it not been for her efforts, NBC would have cancelled the show prematurely and there would likely not be the series of feature films we have today, or the spin-off series. She changed history — or helped fulfill a destiny — with her devotion to *Star Trek*. At any rate, this short film is a fantasy comedy called *The Gent*. It's in 16mm, sync sound and in color. Now, Forry is in great shape today, and he's just turned 75. For any age, he's in terrific shape. But to see him in this film is a tremendous experience for any true *FM* fan. If Forry means anything to you... it's like discovering an unknown early home movie of a beloved relative. He's young, full of energy, just a few years away from creating *Famous Monsters Of Filmland*... It's just great.

Bjo plays a dancing girl conjured up by the genie of the title, played by Fritz. The storyline has Forry calling up Fritz, only to frustrate him through the film because he can't decide how to best spend his three wishes. It's very funny and I just thought fans would like to have a copy. We plan to shoot some wrap-around footage with Forry, touching on how this little treasure got made.

CM: I can hardly wait. Thousands of fans will want to see that.

CARDUCCI: We should have it out in late 1992. In the meantime, we hope that everyone will be entertained, and enlightened by *Flying Saucers Over Hollywood: The Plan 9 Companion*.

(We wish to thank Mark Carducci for taking the time from his schedule to give *Cult Movies* this special interview. For those interested in *The Plan 9 Companion*, please see the related ad in this issue.)

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Farewell To The Master-Blaster



Little Angelo (left) and Johnny Eck from *Freaks* (1932).

By Buddy Barnett

The famous dwarf actor, Angelo Rossitto (2' 11") passed away on September 21, 1991 at the age of 83. Little Angelo had been involved in the motion picture industry for over 60 years. He acted in many films over the years, usually in bits or small parts. Horror movie fans know Angelo for the many film appearances that he made in that genre, including his most famous film: *Freaks* (MGM 1932) directed by Tod Browning. His most well known role in recent years was the role of Master-Blaster in *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985).

Angelo made his first movie appearance in *The Beloved Rogue* (1926) starring John Barrymore. Barrymore became very fond of Angelo and encouraged him to remain an actor (Angelo had intended to study law). Angelo went on to appear with Lon Chaney in *While The City Sleeps* (1928). He also played in the lost mystery/horror film *Seven Footprints To Satan* in 1929. Also in 1929, Angelo played one of the fishermen in MGM's adaptation of Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island*.

Acting opportunities were very limited for a dwarf, so Angelo was forced to supplement his income by operating a newsstand in Hollywood. He later said that he couldn't have survived in Hollywood without his newsstand income. Angelo had some difficult early years in Holly-

wood, but once the newsstand got going, things became easier for him.

In late 1931, Angelo was called back to MGM to appear in Tod Browning's production of *Freaks*. Browning was trying to top his work in *Dracula*, with a story about circus freaks being exploited and cheated by so called 'normal people' and how the 'freaks' exact their revenge. *Freaks* is one of the greatest classics of the horror film, however at the time, the public just could not accept the picture. Many people were just too uncomfortable being exposed to real circus freaks, and others just found the movie too frightening. *Freaks* ended up losing money for MGM and the film drifted off into obscurity for over thirty years before being revived as a cult movie in the late 1960's.

Angelo's part in *Freaks* had been a large one, but he wouldn't have another opportunity like that for many years. He spent the 1930's playing bit parts in many films including: *The Sign Of The Cross* (1932), *Carnival* (1935), and *Charlie Chan At The Circus* (1936). He was also Shirley Temple's stand-in at 20th Century Fox for several of her movies. Angelo's most interesting part in the 1930's, besides *Freaks*, was as one of the three little pigs in Laurel and Hardy's *Babes In Toyland* in 1934. He also appeared in *Mr. Wong In Chinatown* (1939) with

Boris Karloff. According to Angelo, Karloff accused him of being a scene stealer on the set of that picture.

In 1939, Angelo was one of the founders of the organization Little People of America. The organization started with only seven members, but over the years membership swelled into the thousands. Angelo ran for mayor of Los Angeles in 1941 as a publicity stunt; he came in next to last.

Angelo made his first of three film appearances with Bela Lugosi in 1941. The film was *Spooks Run Wild*, produced by Sam Katzman for Monogram Pictures and co-starring the East Side Kids. For *Cult Movies #2*, Angelo gave us a short interview, and told us how much he enjoyed working with Bela Lugosi. According to Angelo, Lugosi was his favorite co-star. Angelo went on to act with Lugosi in *The Corpse Vanishes* (1942), and *Scared To Death* in 1946.

Angelo continued doing bits and small parts throughout the 1940's, 50's, and 60's. Some of the horror/fantasy films that he appeared in were: *Sherlock Holmes And The Spider Woman* (1944) with Basil Rathbone; *Mesa Of Lost Women* (1953); *Dementia* (1955); *Jungle Moon Men* (1955) with Johnny Weissmuller; *Invasion Of The Saucer Men* (as the leader of the saucer men in 1957); *The Magic Sword* (1962) also with Basil Rathbone; *Brain Of Blood* (1971); and *Dracula Vs. Frankenstein* (1971) with J. Carrol Naish and Lon Chaney.

In the 1970's Angelo did a lot of television work, mostly children's shows such as *H. R. Pufnstuff* and *Lidsville*. Angelo was also a semi regular on the detective show *Baretta* (1975-1978). He appeared in a total of 18 episodes.

In the early 1960's Angelo had begun having trouble with his eyesight. Over the years his sight grew progressively weaker, and by the early 1980's he was nearly blind. In spite of this handicap, Angelo had a good role in *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (1983), based on the novel by Ray Bradbury.

Two years later, in 1985, Angelo received the best role of his entire acting career, as the Master-Blaster in *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* starring Mel Gibson. Angelo had a large amount of screen time and he did a great job in the part. His last movie appearance was in *The Offspring* with Vincent Price in 1987.

After his last film appearance, Angelo retired into a rest home in the Fairfax area of Hollywood. Angelo had not ruled out future film work, but his failing eyesight made it difficult for him. Apparently, the last years of his life were happy and peaceful ones, this in direct contrast to his former co-star in *Freaks*, Johnny Eck (the boy with only half a torso). Eck's last years were spent in dire poverty, living in a very bad neighborhood, a virtual prisoner in his own home. Eck became a paranoid, bitter old man, and ironically died in 1991 — the same year as Little Angelo.

In the late 1980's, my associate John Norris



(above) Cult Movies' own Buddy Barnett along with Angelo at the retirement home where he spent the last few years of his life in apparent peace and happiness.

(left) Angelo in his favorite role as the Master-Blaster from *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985).



Angelo with the great Lon Chaney, Sr. from *While The City Sleeps* (1928).

and I visited Little Angelo at his retirement home. Angelo was very cordial, he signed numerous autographs, posed for photos, and discussed his career with us. I found him to be a friendly and upbeat person. He told us that his favorite role was his part as the Master-Blaster in *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*. He also told us that he had tried out for a part in the movie *Willow* (1988), but they wouldn't give him a chance because of his bad eyesight.

After posing for photos, Angelo asked us if we could give him a ride to his bank. We were more than happy to oblige. At the bank, he asked us to point him in the right direction of the door, because of his near total blindness. When he was through with his business, we drove him back to the rest home and thanked him for being so kind to us. He said that it was his pleasure, and for us to visit him again sometime.

My visit with Angelo Rossitto is one of my fondest memories. It was a thrill meeting and talking to the man who starred in many of my favorite movies like *Freaks*, *The Corpse Vanishes*, and *Spooks Run Wild*. The man worked with, and was friendly with people like Bela Lugosi, John Barrymore, Lon Chaney, Basil Rathbone, Tod Browning, Boris Karloff, and many, many others. I am grateful that I had the chance to tell him in person what his career in Hollywood meant to me.

Angelo Rossitto may not have had the greatest career in movies, or have been the best actor, but he played an important part in movie history — especially in fantasy and horror films. His work will never be forgotten. I take this opportunity to salute Angelo Rossitto, and to say farewell to the Master-Blaster.

Angelo Rossitto Filmography

By his own estimate, Angelo Rossitto appeared in over 200 movies and television programs. The following list is far from complete.

1. *The Beloved Rogue* (United Artists, 1926) with John Barrymore and Conrad Veidt.
2. *Old San Francisco* (Warner Brothers, 1927).
3. *While The City Sleeps* (MGM, 1928) with Lon Chaney and Anita Page.
4. *Mysterious Island* (MGM, 1929) with Lionel Barrymore.
5. *One Stolen Night* (Warner Brothers, 1929).
6. *Seven Footprints To Satan* (First National, 1929) with Thelma Todd.
7. *Freaks* (MGM, 1932) with Wallace Ford, Lella Hyams, Johnny Eck, Harry Earles, Violet & Daisy Hilton, Prince Randion and Schlitzie the pinhead.
8. *Sign Of The Cross* (Paramount, 1932).
9. *Babes In Toyland* (MGM-Hal Roach, 1934) with Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.
10. *Carnival* (Columbia, 1934).
11. *Charlie Chan At The Circus* (20th Century Fox, 1936).
12. *Child Bride Of The Ozarks* (Independant, 1937).
13. *Mr. Wong In Chinatown* (Monogram, 1939) with Boris Karloff.
14. *Hellzapoppin!* (Universal, 1941).
15. *Spooks Run Wild* (Monogram, 1941) with Bela Lugosi and The East Side Kids.
16. *The Corpse Vanishes* (Monogram, 1942) with Bela Lugosi, Luana Walters, Tris Coffin and Elizabeth Russell.
17. *Sherlock Holmes And The Spider Woman* (Universal, 1944) with Basil Rathbone and Gale Sondergaard.
18. *Scared To Death* (Screen Guild, 1946) with Bela Lugosi and George Zucco.
19. *Samson And Delilah* (Paramount, 1949).
20. *Baron Of Arizona* (Lippert, 1950) with Vincent Price.
21. *Mesa Of Lost Women* (Howco, 1952).
22. *Dementia* (Independant, 1955).
23. *Jungle Moon Men* (Columbia, 1955) with Johnny Weissmuller.
24. *Carousel* (20th Century Fox, 1956).
25. *Story Of Mankind* (Warner Brothers, 1957).
26. *Invasion Of The Saucermen* (American-International, 1957).
27. *The Big Circus* (Allied Artists, 1959) with Vincent Price and Peter Lorre.
28. *Pocketful Of Miracles* (United Artists, 1961).
29. *The Magic Sword* (United Artists, 1962) with Basil Rathbone and Vampira.
30. *The Wonderful World Of The Brothers Grimm* (MGM, 1963).
31. *Terrified* (Crown International, 1963).
32. *The Trip* (American-International, 1967).
33. *Pufnstuff* (Universal, 1970).
34. *Brain Of Blood* (Hemisphere, 1971).
35. *Dracula Vs. Frankenstein* (Independant International, 1971) with J. Carrol Naish and Lon Chaney.
36. *Mongo's Back In Town* (Banner Associates, 1971).
37. *Clones* (Filmmakers International, 1973).
38. *The Stone Killer* (Columbia, 1973).
39. *Galaxina* (Crown, 1980).
40. *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (Walt Disney/Buena Vista, 1983).
41. *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (Warner Brothers, 1985).
42. *The Offspring* (TMS, 1987) with Vincent Price.

Their Tombs By The Sounding Sea

by **Burton Helms**

Photos by **Jim Knusch**
and **C. L. Heidemann**

The novelist John Dos Passos wrote: "There is nothing much deader than a dead motion picture actor." Dos Passos was speaking mainly of mainstream Kings and Queens of Screenland — the black angel of Hollywood death descending upon their Gower street bungalows or Bel Air estates. Their spectral screen image gets bigger, and they go through the mortification of their earthly bodies. As the number of good dead actors outnumbers the living ones, celebrity grave-sleuthing has grown in its "underground" popularity.

CHARLES LAUGHTON

1899 - 1962

The interment spots of horror and fantasy film actors are especially interesting — we're accustomed to seeing them in ghastly surroundings, in caskets, in graves or getting out of them! Those weaned on Boris and Bela, 50's sci-fi, silent Lon Chaney films will find it poignant to stand in the Hollywood sunshine and realize that this is your fave icon's last stop. The flick's over.

Hollywood Memorial Park Cemetery was established before the turn of the century, and has old Hollywood vibes galore. Community as well as movie industry pioneers are here, amid the funky, slightly-unkept appearance, palm trees, and clear view of the Hollywood sign. You can commune with the spirits of Valentino, C. B. DeMille, Agnes Ayres, Karl Dane and...

Peter Lorre — the child-killer in Fritz Lang's *M* provided the first movie role

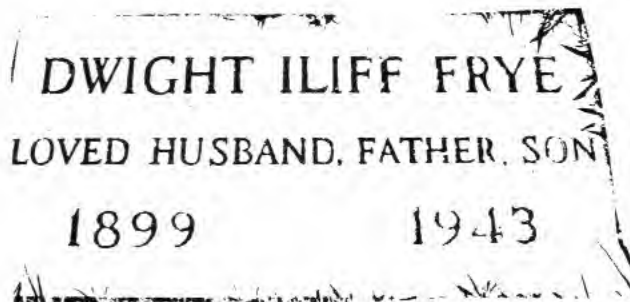
for the big eyes and purring voice of Peter Lorre. Went on to play the mad doctor in the "Hands of Orlac" remake *Mad Love*. Also Mr. Moto in a series of films, the burn victim of *The Face Behind The Mask*, and the paranoid psycho in *The Beast With Five Fingers*. Best friends with Humphrey Bogart, Lorre was in *Casablanca*, currently enjoying a 1992 re-release.

Charles Middleton — Ming! The Emperor of Mongo, in *Flash Gordon*, *Flash Gordon's Trip To Mars*, and *Flash Gordon Conquers The Universe*! Never lacking for work in the old studio system, Middleton appeared in "A" pictures at the majors, as well as dozens of westerns, horror pictures and serials. His obscure films worth checking out include *Daredevils Of The Red Circle* (1939), *Two Weeks To Live* (1942), and *The Mystic Hour* (1934).

Household name and perennial fa-



vorite Skelton Knaggs. British character actor whose name seems chosen to shiver your bones. Seen in *Ghost Ship*, *The Invisible Man's Revenge*, *The Lodger*, *Isle Of The Dead* with Boris Karloff, and *House Of Dracula*.



Holy Cross Cemetery, in Inglewood near the LA Airport, is a pleasant, visitor-friendly cemetery. They have helpful personnel and a list of notable burials at the office. Beautiful view of the ocean from many spots.

The loyal *Cult Movies* reader thinks of George Pal when seeing City Hall in Downtown Los Angeles. Besides bringing in the Martians in *War Of The Worlds* to destroy the landmark building, Pal Produced *Destination Moon*, *When Worlds Collide*, *Conquest Of Space*, *The Time Machine*, *Atlantis The Lost Continent*, and *The 7 Faces Of Dr. Lao*. His "Puppetoons" provided early animation work for young Ray Harryhausen.

Sharon Tate. More famous for her murder, Sharon appeared in *Eye Of The Devil* and *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, both in 1967. Husband Roman Polanski, director of great gothic sensibility, once caught a photographer snapping pictures of him while visiting here. On edge for his trial of statutory rape, Polanski ran the photog down, wrestled him to the ground, and seized his camera.

Bela Lugosi — the Count himself. A great actor of the Hungarian stage, Lugosi came to America in the 20's, leading to his role in the play (and later the movie) *Dracula*. Amidst career ups and downs, acting with such varied co-stars as Garbo, the Bowery Boys, Boris Karloff and Tor Johnson, it's Lugosi's personality that keeps his star burning. *Cult Movies* co-editor Buddy Barnett

LOS ANGELES CITY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Fee \$1.00 Paid _____ June 29, 1937.

Permission is hereby given for the interment or cremation of the remains of
 Mr. Colin Clive who died June 25, 1937.

Cause of death Chr pulmonary tuberculosis

Age 37 Years 5 Months 5 Days

Male ☒ White ☒ Chinese ☐
 Female ☐ Colored ☐ Japanese ☐
 Mexican ☐

Burial ☐
 Cremation ☒
 Mausoleum ☐
 Vault ☐

In Rosedale Cemetery.

F. W. Bergstrom Deputy Registrar.

Dr. Frederic Bergstrom Attending Physician.
George Taniel M.D. Health Officer.

Form 320 This permit must in all cases accompany the body to its destination.

Cremation certificate for Colin Clive.

reports that Lugosi outsells Karloff 10 to 1 in his memorabilia shop, Cinema Collectors in Hollywood. Upon Lugosi's return from England in 1951, a reporter asked, "Doesn't Dracula ever end for you?" Bela, in his aristocratic voice, replied, "No, no — Dracula will never end!"

Also in Holy Cross: Richard Arlen, who was in *The Lady And The Monster*, *The Phantom Speaks*, and was Charles Laughton's unwilling guest in *Island Of Lost Souls*....Jackie Coogan, the only Addams Family actor to have a law named after him...and Jack Haley and Ray Bolger of *The Wizard Of Oz*.

Home Of Peace is a Jewish cemetery in East Los Angeles, originally located on the present site of Dodger Stadium. The Laemmle family occupies a private mausoleum chamber. Carl Laemmle led the fledgling movie industry in its battle against Thomas Edison's "Patents Trust", and purchased the 230 acres that became Universal Studios in 1914. "Uncle Carl" imported many relatives from Germany and gave them nepotistic jobs, but he also imported the German Expressionist style that formed the bedrock of Universal's horror movie fame. Carl Jr., also entombed here, was given the studio for his 21st birthday in 1929, and produced the great horror cycle of the early to mid 30's. Sister Rosabell Laemmle was

briefly the girlfriend of Irving Thalberg, when Thalberg was producing Lon Chaney's Universal successes.

In a comparatively young city, Rosedale Cemetery on Washington Blvd. near Vermont provides some old-fashioned, pastoral surroundings. Cemetery buffs will enjoy the old-style monuments and their epitaphs: "Departed this world in the year of our Lord..." Almost Victorian and spooky enough for —

Tod Browning, director of peculiar genius in both the silent and sound era. Best known for directing *Dracula*, Browning worked in the circus before entering the movies. (Look for him as a race car driver in D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance*), especially in his pictures with Lon Chaney Sr., Browning's realism often crossed into the brutal and sadistic. He directed the lost *London After Midnight*, *Freaks*, *Mark Of The Vampire* with Lugosi, and *The Devil Doll*. Browning became reclusive in his old age, often telling young film students who'd sought him out: "Sonny, I don't talk about the past." He willed his car to his mailman.

BELOVED WIFE OF ROMAN
 SHARON TATE POLANSKI
 1943 † 1969

PAUL RICHARD POLANSKI
 THEIR BABY

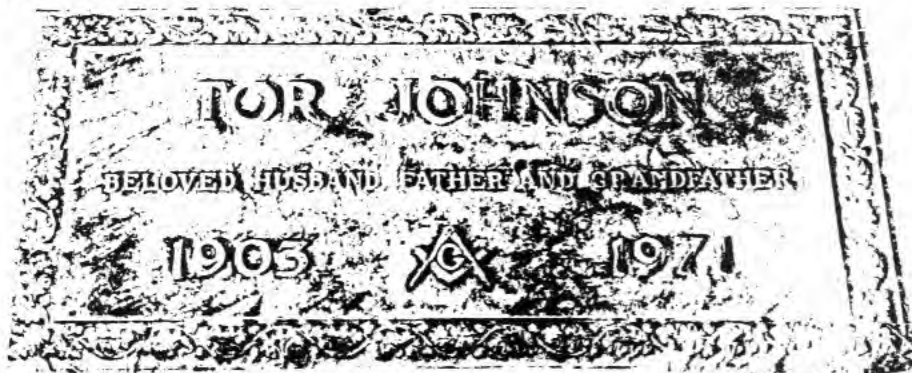
and proclaims him "The Greatest Make-Up Man in the World."

Favorite fiend Dwight Frye's marker frequently has insects crawling on it. Renfield in *Dracula*, Fritz in *Frankenstein*, Herman in *The Vampire Bat* — smaller roles in *The Invisible Man*, *Ghost Of Frankenstein*, and one of his last films, *Frankenstein Meets The Wolfman*. Died from the strain of working defense production at Lockheed Aircraft on the night shift, and acting in films by day. Frye's biggest role (most screen time) was in *The Crime Of Dr. Crespi* with Von Stroheim. Rumors persist of Frye's appearance in a nudist film, spying on sun-bathers from a tree.

Erle C. Kenton, director of *Island Of Lost Souls*, *Ghost Of Frankenstein*, *House Of Dracula*, *House Of Frankenstein*, and *The Cat Creeps*.

Director James Whale, he of the heaviness of *Frankenstein*, and the stylish, sometimes-comic touch of *The Old Dark House*, *The Invisible Man*, and *Bride Of Frankenstein*. After his fabulous 1936 version of *Showboat*, studio

(continued)



CHARLES B. MIDDLETON

1874

1949

policy was cramping his style, and by the time he directed *Green Hell* (1940) he'd lost interest completely. The dapper Englishman and unhappy homosexual (who liked to have sex on the floor) suffered a series of strokes and committed suicide in 1957.

The desire for privacy expressed in the great Lon Chaney's remark "Between pictures, there is no Lon Chaney!" — is reflected in the unmarked marble front of his crypt. However brilliant his make-up and art of pantomime, offscreen Chaney was a laconic hunting-and-fishing kind of guy. The crisp Eastman house print of *Phantom Of The Opera* is now on laserdisc, which allows you to enjoy the poetry of movement all the more. Ted Turner owns all the MGM Chaney's now, and his TNT network occasionally shows the talkie version of *The Unholy Three*. Well, Ted, how about showing *The Unknown*?

It's *The Lodger*! Laird Cregar, the star of the finest film ever made about Jack The Ripper. Also appeared in *Hangover Square* and *Heaven Can Wait* (ironically) before dying too young in 1943.

Director Roland West — identified here by his nickname Ronnie — director of *The Monster* (1925) with Lon Chaney, *The Bat* in 1926, and its early-talkie remake *The Bat Whispers* in 1929. West is equally famous (or infamous) for being the prime suspect in the unsolved murder of actress Thelma Todd in 1935. He was never brought to trial, but he never worked again, either.

Wendayne Ackerman — the "Beloved" was added by husband Forry Ackerman, but "Wife of MR. Science

PETER LORRE

1904-1964

Fiction" was how Wendy wanted to be remembered. Escaping Hitler's Germany in the 30's, she fled to France and eventually America. In 1947, working in the book department of the May Company downtown, she asked the 32 year-old Forry "May I help you sir?" She helped him for 41 years, translating over 150 sci-fi novels from French and

German into English, traveling worldwide, and commanding respect from all the great names in science fiction and fantasy.

Also in Forest Lawn Glendale: Fritz Leiber, actor and father of author Fritz Leiber (*Conjure Wife*, filmed as *Burn Witch Burn*)...Oz author L. Frank Baum...Carole Landis, co-star of Chaney Jr. in *One Million B.C.* (stock footage forevermore!)... Maria Ouspenskaya, easily imagined piloting a carriage through the fog on Forest Lawn's roads...Wallace Beery, intrepid leader of the jungle expedition in *The Lost World*...Richard Dix, of *Transatlantic Tunnel* and the Whistler series...and Michael Curtiz, director of *The Mad Genius* with Karloff, *Dr. X, Mystery Of The Wax Museum*, and *The Walking Dead*...William Cameron Menzies, director of *Things To Come*.

Forest Lawn — Hollywood Hills, in Burbank. Simpler and less pretentious than the original in Glendale, the Hollywood Hills unit occupies the site where the battle scenes

were filmed for *Birth Of A Nation*. And while the Glendale Forest Lawn seems anchored in the 20s and 30's "Golden Age" Hollywood, this one shows its rustic "Valley" status with cowboy actors (Smiley Burnette, Gabby Hayes), and various television stars.

Gene Roddenberry, gentle visionary

NATHAN LAY HOUGHTON

1883

1923

ALICE L. BROWNING

1887

1944

TOD BROWNING

1880

1962

of *Star Trek* fame, and "The Great Bird of the Galaxy" to the cast members of the original TV series. Gene left us on October 24, 1991, and at this writing his grave has no marker.

Not-so-gentle visionary Fritz Lang, director of *Metropolis*, *Siegfried*, *M* with Peter Lorre, *Destiny*, *Spies*, *The Woman In The Moon*, and the great Dr. Mabuse films. Is thought by some to have murdered his first wife in order to marry *Metropolis* author Thea Von Harbou. In later years, Lang was alternately a sentimentalist who carried around a stuffed toy monkey, an autocratic S. O. B. who disagreed by bellowing "You lie!"

What says the Law? Charles Laughton, Dr. Moreau in *Island Of Lost*

KENTON

ERLE C.

1896 - 1980

CLAIRE M.

1896 - 1991

Souls, did not have a lengthy horror-film pedigree, but one that was tasteful and restrained — like his acting. Laughton was among the stellar stormy-night cast of *The Old Dark House*, was a pathos laden *Hunchback Of Notre Dame*, and starred in *The Canterville Ghost* (how did they fit both Laughton and Tor Johnson on the screen in that

GLENN STRANGE

BELIEVED HUSBAND, FATHER, GRANDFATHER

1899

1973

one? More Tor later...)

Glenn Strange — the "fourth Frankenstein" — no Karloff, but the most discerning fans usually commend his portrayal of the Monster in *House Of Dracula*, *House Of Frankenstein*, and *Abbott And Costello Meet Frankenstein*.

Strange also appears in *Flash Gordon*, *The Mad Monster*, *The Mummy's Tomb*, *The Monster Maker*, and *The Black Raven* with George Zucco.

Actor Otto Kruger, like Glenn

Strange, was a trouper who made plenty of our kind of films: *Dracula's Daughter*, *The Hidden Menace*, *The Woman Who Came Back*, *Jungle Captive*... in the 50's, he was in *The Colossus Of New York*, and on TV in *Science Fiction Theatre* and *Thriller*.

Robert Florey contributed hugely to gothic horror, writing the original screen treatment for *Frankenstein* and directing the legendary lost test with Bela Lugosi as the Monster. He did eventually direct Lugosi in a feature, *Murders In The Rue Morgue*; Peter Lorre in the aforementioned *Face Behind The Mask* and *Beast With Five Fingers*. Rarer titles include *The Florentine Dagger*, *The Preview Murder Mystery*, and the pioneering experimental short *The Life And Death Of A Hollywood Extra* (1928).

When the Monster first turned to reveal his visage in *Frankenstein*, it was Arthur Edison behind the camera. A staff cameraman who worked for most

of the majors, Edison had many fantasy film feathers in his cap: in the 1924 *Thief Of Bagdad* with Doug Fairbanks, *The Lost World* (1925), *The Bat* (1926), *The Old Dark House*, and *The Invisible Man*.

Screen legend Bette Davis picked out this particular sarcophagus because it faces Warner Brothers, the studio of her great early triumphs. The cursive inscription at the bottom reads "She did it the hard way." Bette's scary stuff was later in her career: *Whatever Happened To Baby Jane*, *Hush Hush Sweet Charlotte*, *Dead Ringer*, *Burnt Offerings*, and many TV-movies. In October 1989, I personally watched the sealing of her crypt, which also contains her sister & mother.

"Ah, greetings my friends!" At Pierce Brothers Valhalla cemetery, near the Burbank airport — who else but Criswell, the TV psychic immortalized in *Plan 9 From Outer Space*. Film scholar Bill Warren, interviewed in the forthcoming documentary *Flying Saucers Over Hollywood: The Plan 9 Companion*, says: "As soon as he opens his

amongst Dick Powell and June Allyson...TOR!! He's buried in Eternal Valley Memorial Park in Newhall.

"The stars are ageless, aren't they?"
— Norma Desmond

This article was six years in the making, and still can't possibly be the last word on the mausoleums of our maca-

grined to see an article on the same subject appear in *Midnight Marquee* magazine, because I sure didn't want anyone to think I pilfered info from them! The author doesn't live in L. A. — at one point he says that Tod Browning's remains aren't far down Washington Blvd. from the old MGM studio (it's 8 miles) — but they did have nice scoops on England (Karloff) and back east



mouth Criswell is already so far over the top in just what he's saying, that he gets the film off to a perfect start...he's absolutely the top choice to introduce that picture." Between predictions, Criswell was also a landlord, collecting his tenants' rent in his underwear. According to friends, a great night out meant having an expensive cigar in his mouth, a martini in one hand and an ice cream cone in the other.

The "Big Swede with a heart of gold" — mighty Tor Johnson. Also most famous for *Plan 9* and his association with director Ed Wood, Tor's famous films include Wood's *Bride Of The Monster* with Lugosi, *The Black Sleep*, *The Unearthly* with John Carradine, Wood's recently released *Night Of The Ghouls*, and *Beast Of Yucca Flats*. Tor fans enjoy discovering their hero in mainstream Hollywood movies with big stars. There's *The Greatest Show On Earth*, *Lemon Drop Kid* with Bob Hope, but my favorite is *The Reformer And The Redhead*. It's a 1952 MGM "A" film, and sitting there

bre legends. After researching the hard way — as the Lieutenant in *Plan 9* says, "By going down and finding out!" — some mysteries remain. Rosedale Cemetery has the paperwork on Colin Clive's cremation, but records of what happened to his ashes were destroyed by a mortuary now out of business. Dracula leading lady Helen Chandler is still in a holding vault at Chapel of the Pines (near Rosedale) — still without a permanent grave.

While working on this, I was cha-

(Claude Rains).

There are always new "discoveries" waiting for anyone with the time and patience to look, and as *Cult Movies'* expert on where the bodies are buried, maybe they'll allow me some updates. Till then, I'm sure you'll join Boris, Bela, Lon and the gang in Ernest Thesiger's toast in *Bride Of Frankenstein*: "To a new world of Gods and Monsters!"

.....

Cemetery Lots— Crypts

1033

Forest Lawn Hywd Hls. 'Courts of Remembrance'. Companion Lawn crypts. Showcase Park. Nr many stars! No new lots avail! \$5000/both. pp 818/

The Unearthly: Leering Monsters & Purty Girls!



by Bruce Robinson

"LURED! To The HOUSE OF MONSTERS..."

"SEE! HUMAN MONSTERS CREATED WHEN SCIENCE RUNS AMOK!"

"SEE! A MAN FROM THE GRAVE DESTROY HIS KILLER!!

"SEE! THE HOUSE OF MONSTERS — BORN OF A MAD SURGEON'S KNIFE!!!"

"SEE! A BEAUTIFUL GIRL GROW 100 YEARS OLDER IN ONE FANTASTIC MOMENT!!!"

"SEE! THE PEOPLE OF HORROR — DOOMED TO LIVE FOREVER!!!"

The picture that's "GUARANTEED TO FRIGHTEN!"

Sound good, sport?

Make the old heart pound and the

spit glands activate like there's no tomorrow?

If you think the above ad copy is hot, wait'll you hear what the publicists dreamed up for *Beginning Of The End*, companion feature to the flick described above: "The Screen's First Full-Length Science Fiction Thriller with REAL LIVE CREATURES!"

Damn! Any kid who caught this program at the local movie palace of the Fifties couldn't help but find himself in Pig Heaven.

The year was 1957 and the science fiction movie craze had begun to slack off, so a double bill that promised the kinds of thrills described above was sure to pack 'em in.

The publicist who dreamed up the ad copy for *The Beginning Of The End* had

a weird sense of humor, to say the least. He didn't exactly lie to moviegoers, he just bent the truth somewhat. The movie was a "science fiction thriller with real live creatures!" The catch was that producer/director/fx man Bert I. Gordon simply had real live grasshoppers crawl around on still photos of Chicago buildings.

Want giant grasshoppers? No problem, says Bert. "LYNCH THE SCUM!" shrieked the sf purists of that decade, as if they'd never seen it before.

In truth, *Beginning Of The End* wasn't the first such thriller to use "real live creatures." Universal beat Gordon to the punch with *Tarantula* in 1955, but that's a little like comparing *Reefer Madness* to *Citizen Kane*.

The ad quotes which opened this tome were used in publicity for *The Unearthly*, which formed the bottom half of the bill topped by *Beginning Of The End* and was actually the better of the two movies.

That's not to say it's actually good, you understand, but that the top half of the bill is worse! Bert I. Gordon has never been known for making movies that could be considered art, but some of his more watchable films (*Amazing Colossal Man* and *Earth Vs. The Spider* for example) were entertaining enough to keep your more jaded leather-jacketed viewers of the Fifties from rolling beer bottles down the theater aisles.

The Unearthly, not made by Gordon, was your classic pulp era horror thriller: Sleazy, Gruesome and Fun! In his book *Keep Watching The Skies*, Bill Warren is a little too hard on this movie. True, it's not perfect by any stretch of the imagination and it does tend to plod at times, but it delivers the goods as promised by the outrageous sounding ad copy I quoted earlier, and that's more than a lot of movies can say.

The plot goes something like this: Way out in the middle of nowhere stands an old Georgian mansion occupied by Professor Charles Conway (John Carradine) and his sexy assistant Dr. Sharon Gilchrist (former Miss America Marilyn Buford). These two are busy experimenting to perfect the usage of a 17th gland which, when surgically transplanted into a human being, will give endless youth and life everlasting.

Ah, the dreams of Mad Scientists!

Naturally, Conway is looney as a plasters flea on a hound dog's tail. Also, naturally, all of his experiments have failed grotesquely. Lumbering oafishly around his house is his massive hulk of a manservant named Lobo, mimed by none other than Tor (The Swedish Angel) Johnson. Lobo was once a puny, sick man(?) who now possesses the strength of Hercules and "the brain of a chicken."

Lobo is the prosecution's "Exhibit A."

Being treated at the mansion are two nerve cases named Natalie Andries (Sally Todd) and Danny Green (Arthur Batanides). Natalie, a blond hot enough to melt a nuclear reactor, spends her time reading pulp novels while Danny displays explosions of psychopathic hostility, a poor man's Vic Morrow.

Through a no-good city doctor (Hey, they're all in collusion with Mad Scientists!), Conway is supplied with yet another nerve case (i.e. guinea pig) in the person of alluring Grace Thomas (Allison Hayes), who suffers bouts of chronic depression when she isn't busy being sloe-eyed and sassy.

To round matters out nicely, Lobo captures a prowler in the garden who identifies himself as Mark Houston (Myron Healy), a lost hitchhiker. But this Conway ain't no dummy, chief. He sees right through Houston's ploy and correctly (he thinks!) identifies him as escaped criminal Frank Scott, who killed a man during a holdup.

Conway threatens to sic the police on Houston if he doesn't volunteer his services as "guinea pig" for Conway's nutty research. As Conway superciliously points out, what's a poor bad guy gonna do?

"You've thought it out pretty carefully haven't you?" Houston remarks.

Says Conway, "I'm a scientist — thinking is my business!"

"With a mind that warped, there's no telling what he's thinking!" Houston tells Grace a bit later.

As you can doubtlessly surmise from the dialogue, this movie borders on high camp at times.

Science marches onward: Mark Houston and Grace Thomas meet and are instantly attracted to each other. After meeting Conway's other patients, Houston sneaks off to explore the premises and finds one of the results of Conway's mistakes in the basement, a wasted and zombified character called Jedrow (Harry Fler). That night, Conway orders Lobo to get rid of Jedrow when he discovers the unscheduled appearance of a worried relative.

Houston manages to interrupt Lobo

as he's in the process of burying Jedrow alive.

Later, Conway performs his "gland" operation on the gorgeous Natalie. Instead of gaining perpetual youth, she ages about a hundred years — if you'd seen Natalie before the operation, you'd probably want to turn Conway into a soprano!

Conway is crushed by his failure and mopes around the office pulling at his hair while his sex-starved assistant tries to comfort him.

"You need rest, Charles."

"I need nothing that I do not wish to need!"

Hoo boy, this cat's long overdue for an oil change and a tune-up!

Elsewhere, Houston hatches an escape plan with Danny and Grace but Conway catches them and orders Lobo to lock Danny and Houston up while he slithers off to the lab with gorgeous

TWO SOCK-SHOCK SHOWS!



"Beginning of the End"

starring
PETER GRAVES · PEGGIE CASTLE · MORRIS ANKRUM

with THOMAS B. HENRY · THAN WYENN · JAMES SEAY

Produced and Directed by **BERT I. GORDON**

Screen Play by Fred Freiberger and Lester Gorn

An **AB-PT** Picture
Distributed by Republic Pictures Corporation

The Screen's First Full-Length Science Fiction Thriller with REAL LIVE CREATURES!



What was the lure of...

THE UNEARTHLY

Starring
JOHN CARRADINE · ALLISON HAYES · MYRON HEALY

with **SALLY TODD · MARILYN BUFORD · TOR JOHNSON**

Original Story by JANE MANN · Screen Play by
GEORGE DENNIS and JANE MANN

Produced and Directed by **BROOKLYN J. PETERS**

An **AB-PT** Picture
Distributed by **REPUBLIC PICTURES**

SEE: human monsters created when science runs amok!

SEE: a man from the grave destroy his killer!

SEE: the house of monsters — born of a mad surgeon's knife!

Guaranteed TO FRIGHTEN!

PLUS

TWIN SCIENCE FICTION THRILLERS!

Grace. Danny is killed trying to get away from Lobo but Houston makes good his getaway and calls the local sheriff, at which time we learn Mark Houston is really a police lieutenant.

Betcha didn't know that, did ya?

Conway, planning his escape, is cornered in his mad lab by Jedrow, who advances on him brandishing Conway's own special "Number 23 Scalpel." Jedrow kills Conway and Lobo kills Jedrow. The cops arrive to arrest Lobo and Dr. Gilchrist, leaving Houston and Grace free to pitch some woo at each other while the cops hustle down to the deepest recesses of Conway's cellar to discover the movie's best surprise, a horde of shaggy and monstrous critters which constitute the remainder of *The Unearthly's* "unusual" family.

The *Unearthly* was released (with *Beginning Of The End*) in June of 1957. Its running time was 73 minutes, edited down to 68 minutes for British audiences.

John Carradine was one of those performers you loved to watch and listen to, whether at his best or his worst. Born Richmond John Carradine in New York City, he studied sculpture and amateur acting as a youth, beginning his professional career when he joined the New Orleans Repertory Company in that city. Despite any other virtues it might've possessed, *The Unearthly* would've been dull, dull, dull without Carradine to liven it up with his popeyed Shakespearean hamminess. And few (if any) horror film actors could leer quite as lasciviously as Carradine did. To put it simply, he was great!



John Carradine is at his leering best in *The Unearthly* (Republic Pictures, 1957).

Foot Woman, but her horror movie career actually began in 1957 with *The Unearthly*, *The Disembodied*, *The Undead*, and *Zombies Of Mora Tau*.

Hayes stopped acting in the mid-sixties. She fell critically ill during the seventies and died (in 1977) of complications during surgery. She's remembered more for her sexy sultry looks and stunning figure than for her onscreen talents as a thespian. Actually, though, she was a decent actress who managed to create sympathy for

In one ad mat, John Carradine is pictured leering directly at Allison Hayes as she sits on a bed in a loose-fitting nightgown, her legs crossed. Another ad mat depicts the same Carradine leering lecherously at Sally Todd's aforementioned posterior. Hey, you think Carradine gives a hoot about her "thespian" talents?

Rockabilly star, movie buff and horror fan Johnny Legend spent part of his childhood bicycling all over California's San Fernando Valley with his buddies in search of one of his elusive movie idols, Tor Johnson, the hulking presence who created the character of Lobo in *The Unearthly* and other low-budget horror flicks. If you're interested, you can read Legend's spirited account of this adventure in an early issue of Fangoria. In *The Unearthly*, Lobo the manservant spends most of his time groping about the house and gasping out lines like "Time for go to bed!"

In one memorable moment, he hovers over unconscious Sally Todd whimpering "Purty girl, purty girl" like a monstrous Baby Huey!

Obviously not an actor, former pro wrestler Tor Johnson nonetheless holds a deserved place in the hearts of horror enthusiasts everywhere.

If he's reading this, Johnny Legend will probably appreciate my meaning when I say that Myron Healy's appearance as the hero of the movie was a revelation to me when I first saw the flick in 1957. Like most burgeoning

The publicist who dreamed up the ad copy for *The Beginning Of The End* had a weird sense of humor, to say the least. He didn't exactly lie to moviegoers, he just bent the truth somewhat. The movie was a "science fiction thriller with real live creatures!" The catch was that producer/director/fx man Bert I. Gordon simply had real live grasshoppers crawl around on still photos of Chicago buildings.

And in this film, he had plenty to leer at.

Luscious Allison Hayes was born Mary Anne Hayes in Charleston, West Virginia. She toured many cities from Washington, D.C. to Florida as a concert pianist before becoming a beauty contest winner who made her acting debut in Universal's *Sign Of The Pagan* with Jack Palance and Jeff Chandler. She made her biggest splash in 1958 as the title character in *Attack Of The 50*

the fragile and neurotic women she played.

Sally Todd, who played the ill-fated Natalie, was born and raised in Tucson, Arizona. She came to Hollywood and roomed with Kim Novak while pursuing an acting career that wasn't notable. A beautiful blonde, it was Sally's tightly wrapped, full-length posterior that adorned most of the posters for the movie, not her "onscreen talents as a thespian."

movie buffs of that era, I'd seen and enjoyed Healy's work as the bad guy in more movie and TV appearances than I could ever remember. He had the sort of grim, silent, literate delivery that made the surliest villain seem intelligent.

A badass with class who delivered a curious performance in *The Unearthly* — right away, we're asked to believe he's a bad guy named "Mark Houston."

Not "Ace" or "Snake" or "Slick" or "Al" but rather "Mark!" In those days you never named a bad guy Mark or Matt or Paul or Chris. On top of that, our escaped "killer" is courteous and complimentary to beautiful women and considerate of all other good human beings. In other words (and for probably the first time in his villainous career), Myron Healy was actually unconvincing as a bad guy!

All the same, it was so great (in those days) to find Healy playing a hero of all things!

Born in Petaluma, California, Healy was educated in Santa Rosa and enlisted in the Air Force during World War II, serving as a navigator-bombardier in the European theatre of the war. He began his Hollywood career at Republic Studios (distributor of *The Unearthly*), writing westerns and learning the tricks of the trade while occasionally acting in some of the westerns he wrote. He worked in over 350 films as either a heavy or a character actor with *The Unearthly* being his first role as a good guy. He later played the hero in *Varan The Unbelievable* and put in an appearance as a good scientist with a thick Scottish brogue in the TV miniseries *V*.



Professor Conway has a special surgical instrument we discussed earlier, referred to as "Number 23 Scalpel." Dr. Gilchrist hands it to Conway while he's operating on Natalie. Now, maybe I was blind, but I couldn't help wondering what was so special about #23 and what had happened to the other 22. Finally, Conway sets #23 aside and turns to Gilchrist with a dark and dramatic intensity.

"Now — the gland!" he demands significantly.

The #17 gland, shown pulsating in Conway's gloved hand, is a grisly looking slug-like critter that is never sufficiently explained. It's activated by radiation driven through the glandular system via the application of a massive discharge of electricity, as if by a poor man's Kenneth Strickfaden.

Getting back to that #23 scalpel, its greatest significance becomes known near the end of the movie, as the zombie-like Jedrow corners Conway in his office.

"No! You're dead!" Conway exclaims as he backs away with his eyes bulging out. "I had you buried! I know you're dead!"

Guess again, Doc! That ain't no swizzle stick he's pointing at you, it's that nasty old #23 scalpel!

Next to John Carradine, the real star of this movie is a man named Harry Thomas, unsung hero of quickie horror movie monster makeups. Thomas plied his trade (usually unheralded) in

countless movies, including horror and science fiction films, but *The Unearthly* contains his best and most interesting work. His "old age" disfigurement of Sally Todd is one of the movie's highlights and is singularly responsible for any sympathy created for her character, but his real workmanship is displayed at the movie's climax, its best moment.

In the cellar catacomb of Conway's house, a menagerie of hairy mutants is enslaved to provide the power for Conway's radiology treatments. Snarling, grunting, screeching, shrieking, these monstrous horrors are former men and women turned into mindless things as a result of Conway's experimentation.

One of the onlooking cops inquires anxiously, "What'll we do with them?"

Says another, "Good lord, what if they do live forever?"

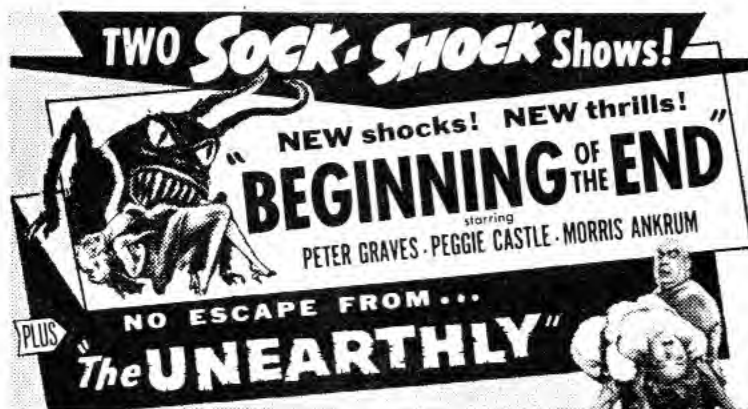
They're working at it, pal! A great many of them can be seen lumbering mindlessly about their new homes, the streets of contemporary America.

The shooting title for this film, based on an original story by Jane Mann, was *They Lived A Million Years*. The screenplay was penned by Geoffrey Dennis and Jane Mann and the cinematographer was Merle Connell, A.S.C. The menacingly effective musical score was composed by Henry Varse and orchestrated by Michael Terr.

The Unearthly was produced and directed by Brooke L. Peters. As a low-budget, bottom-bill horror thriller, it flounders somewhere between *Island Of Lost Souls* and *Mesa Of Lost Women*. Not a great film, but not all that bad, either. For myself, I have just one question that's been jitterbugging around in my head since I first saw this flick: What the hell is a dish like Marilyn Buford doing hangin' around a murky old house like that one, anyway?

You think maybe she did it all for science?

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Fanzines In Review

Little Shoppe Of Horrors (Issue 10/11 combined; Send \$9.95 to; Richard Klemensen, P.O. Box 3107, Des Moines, IA 50316) It seems as though some of the best fanzines out there at the present time have to do with foreign films. This zine is one of the best, a journal of Hammer Films of England which, in recent issues, has resembled a huge, detailed book rather than a magazine. The recent package, which is a combination of two issues under one cover, is 168 pages packed with interviews, reviews, and tons of beautiful photos. Includes: *The Making of Kiss Of The Vampire*, Music for Hammer Films, Animation Masters Jim Danforth and Ray Harryhausen, unfiled Hammer projects, and much more. You get an education on how to make movies just by seeing the photos and behind the scenes stories of what went into these great British horror classics. A must read.

Markalite (Single copy price: \$6.00 Four issue subscription \$20.00. To; Markalite, c/o Pacific Rim Publishing, P.O. Box 23651, Oakland, CA 94623) The Magazine of Japanese Fantasy, and another must-have for fans of these films. Wisely, each issue carries lots of info on Godzilla and the Toho monsters, since those are the subjects with the widest, time-tested appeal. But the first three issues thus far have also had plenty coverage of Giganter, Kamen Rider Black, Kurosawa classics, and the 25th Anniversary of Ultraman. We love the Japanese monster films, so naturally want you to read this glorious magazine. It's on slick paper with generally good photo reproduction. Issue #3 features an article by August Ragone and Guy Tucker entitled: "Kaiju Babylon — The Legend of Godzilla (The Honda Years: 1954 to 1965)" It is an informed, warmly written, and often very probing report on this very special contribution to the fantasy cinema. Future issues promise continued dedication to this unique subject. We can't suggest *Markalite* highly enough. Try it.

Asian Trash Cinema (Single copy price: \$4.50. Subscriptions 4 issues for \$15.00. To Craig Ledbetter, PO Box 5367, Kingwood, TX 77325) Talk about dedicated reportage on a hidden area of

cult movies, this is it. Asian Trash Cinema is another magazine you cannot afford to be without. For a variety of reasons, the Japanese horror films (and cars) have tended to insinuate their way into our American popular culture while the Chinese fantasies have tended to remain a part of the mysteries of the exotic East. Even the films of Jackie Chan and director John Woo have not been seen by a large number of us in the West. Perhaps this will soon change. Just leafing through this fine little magazine, reading through the 400 reviews in their first issue, has made us curious enough to start renting videos of these strange and beautiful ghost, vampire, martial arts films from Hong Kong, Thailand, India, and (sometimes) Japan. Try this mag. You'll be hooked, too.

Syn (1770 N. Highland Ave, Box 703, Hollywood, CA 90028 Single copy price by mail, \$1.50) An always interesting newspaper full of new comic art, book and videw reviews, on-the-scene reports of West Coast conventions, film festivals, cult-movie-related autograph parties, and so much more. Editor Chris Amouroux is a charming young fan who has interests in all of Fandom. Prior to SYN, she used to publish the rock zine *Endless Party*. Now she's devoting her talents and good works to the realm of camp film and related interests. Always full of great photos and insider reports by writers like Eric Caidin, and by Chris herself, SYN is a must read for all serious cult film enthusiasts. The latest issue (#5) features Synema Siren Caroline Munro, covers the recent Fangoria convention, reviews Aja Blu comix, famous murder trading cards, and lots else. If your local comic store isn't stocking Syn, you can try a sample copy by sending a buck and a half to the address above. Worth it.

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Reviews

Forrest J Ackerman, *Famous Monster Of Filmland, Volume II* (Hollywood Publishing Company).

Famous Monsters Chronicles (FantaCo Enterprises, Inc.).

Monsterama (Fantagraphics Books, Inc.).

I saw my first monster movie, *The Giant Behemoth*, in September of 1962. I was five years old. After that experience I was hooked on monsters. I couldn't get enough of them. I had to see every monster movie that played on television and I forced my mom or my aunt to take me to just about every monster movie that played in town. Fortunately, both my mom and my aunt had been big horror movie fans when they were young and they encouraged me in my obsession.

Famous Monsters Of Filmland magazine was a big part of every monster fans' life in those days. The first issue of Forrest J Ackerman's magazine that I remember seeing as a kid at the local newsstand was issue #26 with a cover showing a monster from *The Outer Limits*. However, I did not start buying the magazine regularly until a couple of years later. The magazine was a revelation to me, I found out that kids all over the country were into monsters. I still vividly remember looking at the pictures of fantastic and obscure monsters, vowing to myself that someday I would see all of them on the screen. I haven't made it yet but, after 30 years I'm still trying.

I used to show my copies of *Famous Monsters* to a neighbor kid whose parents would not allow him to see any monster movies. I would tell him about all the monsters in the magazine. My brothers and I could not believe how cruel this boy's parents were to him. They probably thought they were protecting his mind or something. I used to feel really sorry for the kid, while at the same time being grateful that my parents were so enlightened to the coolness of monster movies. I wouldn't be surprised if that kid grew up to be a mass murderer.

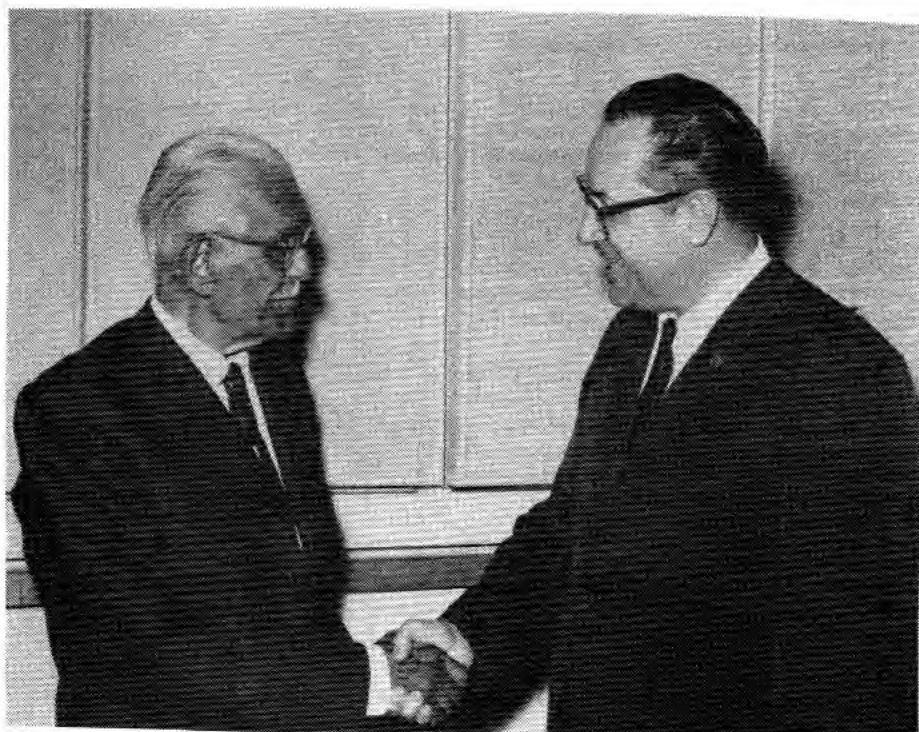
Lately, there has been a resurgence of interest in *Famous Monsters* magazine, with several books and magazines being published that feature reprints from and reminiscences of the fondly remembered magazine. It was a great pleasure to read *Famous Monster Chronicles*, *Famous Monster Of Filmland*, and *Monsterama* magazine. They brought back a lot of fond memories for me.

Forrest J Ackerman, *Famous Monster Of Filmland* is Volume 2 of Mr. Ackerman's reminiscences of his days as editor of *Famous Monsters* magazine. The Volume covers issues #51 to #100. The book shows each cover of that group and Ackerman comments on each issue.

The book makes for light, amusing reading and is full of extras, including: selected reprinted articles from *Famous Monsters*, rare photos (including some that never ran in *Famous Monsters*), and some surprises such as the first publication of James Whale's original screen treatment for *The Invisible Man* (intended for Boris Karloff). It is a good thing that Whale's version wasn't used, because it's just awful. The story seems like something that Edward D. Wood Jr. would have filmed.

The book is an oversized paperback with full color covers and is well put together. I recommend it highly.

The second book is *Famous Monster Chronicles*, a celebration of the early years of *Famous Monsters*. The book is an anthology edited by Dennis Daniel. Many different writers give their impressions of *Famous Monsters* magazine and what it meant to them. The contributors include: Michael J. Weldon, Don



Boris Karloff and Forrest Ackerman.

Glut, Fred Olen Ray, Scott Spiegel, Bill Warren, Mark Carducci, John & Michael Brunas, Jim Knusch, and many others. There are also shorter reminiscences by many famous people including: John Agar, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, Roger Corman, Alex Gordon, Ray Harryhausen, John Landis, Sam Raimi, etc. For some reason, screenwriter Curt Siodmak submitted a piece about writing *The Wolfman*, he never mentions *Famous Monsters*.

The book also features interviews with some of the fine artists who painted the covers for *Famous Monsters*. Every cover of *Famous Monsters* is reprinted (it's fun to pick out your favorite covers). An index of the articles printed in each issue is also included. There are also features on *Famous Monsters*' mail order house, The Captain Company (it's too short); collecting *Famous Monsters* magazines; editor Ackerman's film appearances; and even some fiction. One of the most interesting features is the Warren Report, an in depth history of the early years of *Famous Monsters* magazine, written by Greg Theakston.

I recommend *The Famous Monsters*

Chronicles to anyone who grew up with, and has fond memories of *Famous Monsters* magazine.

Forrest J Ackerman also edits a magazine called *Monsterama* which utilizes mostly reprinted stories from *Famous Monsters*. Issue number two just came out in the spring of 1992. The magazine looks good and the photo reproduction is excellent. Ackerman's stated aim for the magazine is twofold: the first is to make available reprints of *Famous Monsters* to those unfortunate people that did not save their copies when they were younger (or the ones whose parents threw their copies out into the trash). The second and more important reason is to get the children of today interested in the old monsters. Sadly, children have lost all of their imagination in today's world after constant exposure to Freddy Krueger, *Friday the 13th*, *Hellraiser* movies and endless blood and guts and de-humanized soulless monsters.

Mr. Ackerman's goal is a noble one, but it seems, to me, pretty hopeless. The children of today don't realize what they are missing, and what is worse, they probably couldn't care less.

reviewed by Buddy Barnett.

Deadly Amazons

Amazon Productions

Produced by Ken Mayer, Directed by Samuel Martin Oldham, Executive Producer, Dan Shiva, Screenplay by Oldham, based on LH Art comic stories by Larry Heller, Mark Spilddoren, Robin Ator, Eugene Bilbrev.

Starring; Lelani Dalumpines, Erika Andersch, Erin Wieda, Conrad Brooks, Dot Jones, Flo Butterfield.

Deadly Amazons is the first of a series, shot directly on video, featuring large, muscular women in outlandishly violent adventures. The stories are based on LH Art comic books. The movie consists of three episodes strung together by a framing device of an amazon babysitter hired to sit with a couple of juvenile delinquents. The babysitter tells the stories.

The three episodes are not connected in any way, each one is an adaptation of a different comic book story. The first is the story of Mrs. Loo, a double agent in Saigon; the second involves private eye Samantha Clench; and the last story concerns a female Tarzan type called Kageena. The stories are just excuses to set up violent situations.

I must admit that I really enjoyed the violence. It was fun seeing the amazon women beating up a bunch of stupid men. The fights, especially the ones involving martial arts, were fairly well done.

The acting by the leads is just barely adequate. The best performance in the movie is by veteran actor Conrad Brooks playing the father of the unruly children. Brooks plays the part for comedy and has some pretty funny lines of dialogue.

The video photography is just fair, and the production is obviously low budget, but overall the movie is fun.

reviewed by Rosemary Lingua

M — Available on videotape and laserdisc from Embassy Home Entertainment and the Janus Collection. Starring Peter Lorre.

Fritz Lang's *M* is a unique motion picture in many ways. It is a classic example of German expressionism and it is not surprising that Lang had been first approached to direct *The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari*, the archetype of German expressionist cinema. This film shows that Lang was a master of his medium. His absolute understanding of the power of impression manifest by a shadow cast across a face, an angled shot of a foreboding citizen, or an arched shot of an ominous staircase, is more than in evidence in *M*.

Peter Lorre, in his film debut, gives a masterful performance as the child murderer. His use of physical gesture, exemplified in the mirror scene, combined with a powerfully dramatic approach to the nature of the role itself, makes his portrayal unforgettable.

Lang perfectly conveys the aura of *M*'s world, the world of the streets and those who live in them. His use of the cityscape, mastered in *Metropolis*, is

perfected in *M*'s billowing smokestacks and dreary streets. Smoke itself plays a part in creating *M*'s atmosphere as it an integral visual element of many scenes.

"In the Hall of the Mountain King" from "Peer Gynt Suite" plays an extremely important part in the total effectiveness of the film, allowing the audience the added tension of knowing of the child murderer's approach before he is actually seen. Lang, in his first sound film, uses sound masterfully, never awkwardly.

The suffering of the child murderer is made obvious in Lorre's portrayal and in effect this film outlines Lang's later move toward showing the ear-marking of an individual by society and the helplessness of the individual. Lang's subtlety in handling his subject matter — this hideous business of child-murdering! — shows an understanding totally lacking in today's filmmakers, the knowledge that the imagination can produce far more horrible ways of murder than could ever be depicted on screen.

M stands today as one of the classic films of all



time and easily deserves to be on everyone's 10 best list.

Reviewed by John Norris

Review:

The Invisible Ray Released on laserdisc March 19, 1992 by MCA Universal Home Video. B&W, 1 hr. & 20 min.

The Invisible Ray, Universal's third teaming of Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff has just been released on laserdisc by MCA. A fine film, this one features Karloff as a scientist who goes mad and Lugosi in an unusually benign and sympathetic role as Dr. Benet, Karloff's associate. In one of his finest performances on film, Lugosi gives a wonderfully restrained interpretation of Dr. Benet and his death at the hands of

Karloff is both moving and unnerving.

With its scientific trappings and story of murder, *The Invisible Ray* is an exciting film which also has a terrific climax as Karloff literally burns out like a cigarette. *The Invisible Ray* was produced in 1936 and was directed by Lambert Hillyer.

While the print quality is usually fine there are some places that could be cleaned up. The sound is digital quality and the disc has been chapter encoded. Also included is the Realart re-issue trailer of *The Invisible Ray*.

Reviewed by John Norris.



The Beast Of Yucca Flats

Produced by Anthony Cardoza

Director/Screenwriter Coleman Francis

Starring: Tor Johnson, Douglas Meller, Tony Cordoza, Barbara Francis, Conrad Brooks

"Touch a button...things happen. A scientist becomes a beast." This dubbed narration pretty much sums up the premise for this very low budget find

originally released in 1961. If you love bad old movies, then you're in for a real treat with this one.

Tor Johnson plays Joseph Jovorski, a Soviet scientist prepared to hand over secret documents to U. S. officials. Unfortunately, he is intercepted by KGB agents with incredibly bad shooting skills. Shot after shot misses this huge slow-moving target as he practically



saunters into the desert. But, even he is no match for the atomic bomb that explodes nearby. And, just as you might fear, this causes him to become a killing machine.

The sound of this movie was added after it was shot so there is almost no dialogue and only periodic off-screen narration. The narration provides such philosophical ponderings as, "A once powerful, humble man reduced to...nothing." The announcer's conclusions sometimes seem kind of harsh. He's a fiend, isn't he? Shouldn't that count for something?

At one point, the narrator informs us that a city family (very urbane indeed) is traveling east for a vacation. While delayed with a flat tire, the two adventurous city boys manage to get lost in Yucca Flats. Their father begins to search for them and is mistaken by the airborne sheriff for the killing fiend. It becomes North by Northwest desert style except that the dad looks more annoyed than terrified at being hunted

by aircraft. During another scene with the family at a gas station, the narrator inexplicably adds, "Nothing bothers some people. Not even flying saucers." Hmmnn. It has absolutely nothing to do with the plot, but it is an interesting observation nonetheless.

I never did figure out for sure who killed the partially nude woman in the first scene. Presumably, Joseph Javorski hadn't arrived by plane and been nuked yet. Perhaps, previous scientists had wandered into the missile range and become killing fiends. This might explain the patrol officers' casual disregard for due process or as the narrator revealed, "kill first...ask questions later." Maybe Joe Javorski wasn't the first scientist to run amuck.

In fact, that is the real appeal of this movie. With all the gaps in the plot and long pauses between dialogue and narration, the viewer has plenty of time to concoct their own conclusions and explanations. In fact I'm still trying to understand the symbolic significance of the bunny rabbit in the ending...

Reviewed by Kristen Blankenship

Swamp Of Lost Monsters

Made in Mexico, starring Gaston Santos, Manola Saavedra, Manuel Dondi.

Released in U.S. by K. Gordon Murray in 1965.

Swamp Of Lost Monsters is one of the damndest hybrid movies that I've ever seen. It's part *Creature From The Black Lagoon* ripoff; part B western; part mystery; part comedy; and part musical. This movie is one of the most stupefying movies that I have ever seen.

The plot, as far as I can figure out, concerns a lake monster that occasionally attacks people on land, and unscrupulous ranchers out to cheat a woman out of her property. Throw in some mumbo jumbo about a secret will and a missing body; endless scenes of

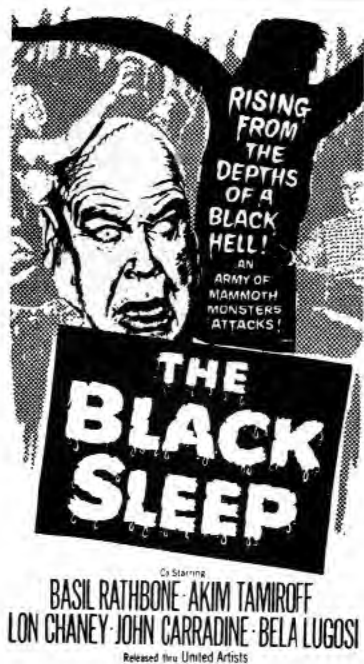
people on horseback or riding on a boat back and forth across this swamp and you have your typical Mexican monster movie hodgepodge.

The swamp monster in this movie has to be seen to be believed. It looks like a man wearing long johns covered with fungus. He has a fish head with what appears to be Mickey Mouse ears.

The movie is cheap and pretty boring most of the time, but is worth seeing just for the crazy monster costume. Even though the title is *Swamp Of Lost Monsters*, only one monster actually appears. The other monsters of the title must have been truly lost.

(Available from Something Weird Video.)

reviewed by Buddy Barnett



Many times we've read about Tor Johnson's career as a wrestler. But where's the proof? Here is a photo of Tor as The Swedish Angel, taken from a newspaper ad in the early 1940s. Photo property of Drew Freedman, on loan from Mark Carducci.



THE AMAZING CONRAD BROOKS (Part 2)



Tor Johnson and Conrad search in vain for a script so they can sort out what really happens in *The Beast Of Yucca Flats* (Cinema Associates, 1962).

Conrad Brooks has been a friend to *Cult Movies* from the very start. No stranger to readers of these pages, Conrad now provides a very unique and valuable service to us all.

Some actors tend to save memorabilia from their films, while others treat their films as "just a job" and could truly not care less about preserving anything re-

lating to the work they've done. Fortunately, Conrad Brooks is one of those actors with a sense of duty to the Future Fans. He's kept a scrapbook loaded with clippings from his career; reviews, premiere notices, etc. Since this issue is concerned with the lives and films of Ed Wood and Tor Johnson, our pal Conrad has graciously given us access to these

original "on-the-spot" reports! Now you can read what the critics had to say back then, when these campy, cult classics were brand new. Thanks a million Conrad!

Glen Or Glenda? (Variety; May 22, 1981) New York - Originally self-distributed in 1953 (not reviewed by Variety at the time) by its producer, George G. Weiss, *Glen Or Glenda?* is an exploitation film dealing with transvestism and sex-change. Similar in format to other vintage "expose" films such as Dwain Esper's 1934 *Maniac* and the frequently revived *Reefer Madness*, the picture has the potential to lure midnight film devotees and other curiosity seekers. Paramount Pictures pickup for re-release marks a rare involvement of a major distrib with such fringe product.

Told mainly in semi-documentary fashion, story unfolds as two case histories related by a psychiatrist. Main story concerns Glen, a man who secretly dresses in women's clothes, much to the dismay of his fiancée Barbara.

Other story briefly deals with Alan, identified as a "pseudohermaphrodite," who is changed into Ann by a sex-change operation (presented tastefully without the explicit shock visuals common to such case study pix).

Though opening credits warn of film's stark realism, director Edward Wood's use of stock footage, cheap sets, perfunctory visuals and recited-lecture dialog give the picture a phony quality. What distinguished it from other low-budget efforts are the occasional mad flights of fancy.

Most involve a weird scientist, delightfully played by Bela Lugosi in eye-popping fashion. Also out of the ordinary is a suggestive (but far from pornographic) sequence of women writhing in their sexy undies, laden with bondage overtones, as well as a surrealist nightmare scene reminiscent of John Parker's subsequent *Dementia* film.

With some wacky and often hilarious dialog and narration completing the concoction, *Glen Or Glenda?* is a divert-

ing curio, and its chances of attracting a repeat-viewership following are enhanced by the recent transvestite-oriented pictures such as *La Cage Aux Folles* and *Rocky Horror Picture Show*. Print screened bore the title *I Led Two Lives*, one of many monickers used during its initial release.

Bride Of The Atom (Los Angeles Herald Dispatch; Thursday, June 16, 1955. Reviewed by Henry Bederski) *Bride Of The Atom*, a violent and terror ridden movie that was produced on a very modest budget plus a thousand and one headaches, marks the return of Bela Lugosi to the screen. Lugosi plays the part of a mad scientist, who living in a forbidding looking mansion that is simply radioactive with atomic schemes and plans, is responsible for a series of murders committed at a nearby swamp.

As the melodrama unfolds in all its fury, we find the police are baffled by the murders. So in steps our lovely heroine, played by Loretta King, who enacts the roles of a newspaper-woman with just more than a pretty nose for news. Thus she treads where angels would not dare, by doing some private investigating at the swamp area. The plot thickens when she is kidnapped there by Lugosi's henchman (Tor Johnson) and brought to the mansion. Scores of police, newsmen and detectives converge upon the mansion of mystery, just as the mad Lugosi is about to perform his atomic operation upon the unconscious Miss King — the prospective bride of the atom.

Lugosi and Miss King stand out sharply from the rest of the cast by their astonishing ability as players.

Harvey Dunn plays an amiable, bird-loving police captain; Tony McCoy tries hard to be a convincing detective, however, he has his supreme moment when he rescues Miss King from the burning laboratory; Tor Johnson makes a frightful looking "Lugosi henchman"; Dolores Fuller sparkles in a chief role as the secretary of the Police Captain; Ben Frommon and Conrad Brooks are seen briefly, but they are okay.

Edward D. Wood Jr., who produced, wrote and directed the picture, is to be commended for the way he kept his picture moving at a brisk pace to the very end.

Hell Born (Los Angeles Herald Dispatch, Thursday July 5, 1956. Reviewed by Henry Bederski) Film Location. Last week the custodian of this column was invited by producer George Weiss to join forces with his huge troupe of players who were headed for location filming at a two-by-four village somewhere in San Fernando Valley.

Naturally, we accepted the kind invitation only on the basis that we would simply play the role of an innocent bystander.

The name of the picture to be filmed, before we forget, is titled *Hell Born*, a



Conrad Brooks directs his experimental masterpiece, *Mystery In Shadows*.

melodrama that deals with America's current nightmare of juvenile delinquency. In short, the picture could be regarded as a small-budget *Rebel Without A Cause*.

As for the players, they include Edward D. Wood, Jr., James "Duke" Moore, Conrad Brooks, Vickie Baker, Carole Gallos, and Carmen Lee.

Once we arrived on location, the series of scenes to be filmed by actor-writer-director Ed Wood are varied and difficult. So the camera is quickly set up and before long, Wood puts his gang of teenagers through their histrionic paces, which includes drinking, singing, dancing, and fighting.

Later, as though director Wood had not done enough already, he nonchalantly applies make-up to his face. Seems he is about to play the role of the hero.

So when the scene is set up, Wood and Conrad Brooks engage in a vicious fist fight and, after some spills, they end up in the bottom of a gully. After several retakes of the scene, Wood is finally satisfied with the results.

And a good thing, too, for he and Brooks are plainly exhausted, with the heat of the day increasing as the fierce sun rides high in the sky.

Producer George Weiss, with one eye cocked on his wilted actors, checks and re-checks the script. Then, he throws up his arms, indicating that the days filming is over. Thus, a fragment of *Hell Born* is finished — and decidedly under conditions that were hell born! (NOTE: The film *Hell Born* was never made, but this fight scene was eventually incorporated into the film *Sinister Urge*.)

Grave Robbers From Outer Space (HERALD-DISPATCH, Dec. 6, 1956. Reviewed by Henry Bederski) The other day at Quality Studios, they finished shooting a science fiction movie called *Grave Robbers From Outer Space*. Its star, Bela

Lugosi was not there to witness the event, as he passed away a few months ago.

That Lugosi was not there, when five more days of filming were required, did not in the least perturb producer Edward D. Wood, Jr. For, luckily enough, this skilled veteran (he's only 32) of science fiction movies had filmed all the Lugosi scenes a few weeks prior to the actor's death.

So for five days Wood shot scene after scene, with his usual facility in getting his players to quickly respond to his direction.

As for the story, it could be described as a real chiller, dealing with super-intelligent men from outer space who come down to earth and take bodies from the graves and bring them back to life.

The executive producer of the film, J. Edward Reynolds, when asked what he thought of the picture, quickly stated "that it is the most horrifying since *Frankenstein*."

The players supporting Lugosi are Lyle Talbot, Greg Wolcott, Mona McKinnon, Duke Moore, Richard Powers, Carl Anthony, Paul Marco, Tor Johnson, Dudley Manlove, John Breckenridge, Criswell, Vampira, and Conrad Brooks. Tom Mason doubled for Lugosi in some extra added scenes.

In closing, one must handsomely congratulate Ed Wood for bringing to completion a picture that would have won the approval of Bela Lugosi had he lived to see it. Thus ends the movie combination of Lugosi and Wood. (Film was released as *Plan 9 From Outer Space*.)

The Beast Of Yucca Flats (Variety, Friday, May 19, 1961. Reviewed by "Tube") Filmmaking at the \$34,000 - per level is of course fraught with production peril and artistic compromise. That sobering fact is all too clearly illustrated by *The Beast Of Yucca Flats*, an earnest but



Conrad goes eyeball to eyeball with Vampira.

uncertain effort to tell a taut and different screen-story-with-a-message on discouragingly limited means. Picture, produced by Anthony Cardoza and Roland Morin and, as of now, shy the all-important release commitment, lamentably shapes up as somewhat crude even by lower berth program standards, which are, realistically, all it can aspire to.

Written and directed by Coleman Francis, the story centers around the plight of a noted scientist who, chased by Communist agents into an A-bomb test area, is somehow transfigured into an inhuman fiend through radiation after-effects. Most of the picture is concerned with efforts to track him down after he has committed two murders. Dialog is held to a bare minimum in favor of narration which is frequently too stilted, superfluous and condescending to be of much aid in advancing the story or developing interest.

There is definite menace in the behavior of the beast, but the activities of other

characters are irrational and the direction often displays a jarring lack of geometric perspective, an important factor in a film so dependent upon the logic and nature of the chase. For instance, a good hundred errant bullets are fired at people, some almost a point-blank range. Credulity, in short, is strained throughout.

Camera work and editing reflect the cut-corners character of the coin allotment, the former frequently so dark that one is squinting at silhouettes, the latter to jumbled for comfort. The actors actually benefit from the absence of much dialog, relying on visual projection to get their feelings across, capably in most cases.

All in all, this is a film that courageously attempts to lift itself out of the routine meller class by instilling a message (A-bomb tests are history's pests) into the narrative. But the lifting requires greater resources and resourcefulness than these game cinemateers could quite muster this time out.

Mystery In Shadows (Film Daily; June 18, 1964.) This is no mystery because it's a labor of love, conceived by Conrad Brooks and executed under his personal supervision for an art house attraction that by its very unique approach should claim considerable attention and word of mouth reaction.

It's sort of a whodunit, entirely in shadow form, with Brooks playing a role in addition to having written and directed it. The narration is by Alan Ward, Photography by Lee Strosnider, music by Ruth Bederski.

This contribution could very well pave the way to a series, if accepted. There is no reason why it shouldn't be by the public and 400-odd art houses that cry out for this sort of experimentation.

Mystery In Shadows (Glendale Independent; Sunday, April 26, 1964) Producer Conrad Brooks unveiled a new technique in movie-making with his production of *Mystery In Shadows*, soon to be released.

Mystery In Shadows is only nine and a half minutes long, but contains a plot that will keep the viewer's interest throughout. The unusual technique that Brooks has employed is actually very simple — and very inexpensive. The camera is placed in a stationary position facing a blank white wall. The actors are placed in front of large spotlights, throwing their shadows against this wall. All that is shown on the screen, therefore, are the shadows of the performers.

No lines are spoken by the actors. The entire program is narrated by Alan Ward. The plot is simple — an actress is killed and a detective searches out the killer by process of elimination.

The cast includes Will Rahming, Elizabeth Hart, Henry Bederski, Fermin Urdagagin, Alan Ward, and producer Conrad Brooks.

(NOTE: This award-winning short subject, *Mystery In Shadows*, is at last available to the home video viewer. It is included as a part of the new VHS collection, *Best Of Cult Movies*. Look for advance order information elsewhere in this issue.)

.....

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Noteworthy & The Not Worthy

(continued from page 7)

that will be eagerly sought by fans, all sure to increase in value in years to come. Take a look at their "Discovery", from 2001: A Space Odyssey shown in their ad on our inside back cover. You'll love their detail work!!!



The Fly, 1/8 scale model available from Lunar Models.

Scorched Earth Productions may have a new cult hit on their hands with their release of the film, *Even Hitler Had A Girlfriend*, a show with a very definite tone about it, sustained throughout. *Even Hitler Had A Girlfriend* is a hilarious new black comedy about a lonely night watchman and his unsuccessful relationships with women. The feature film was directed by Colorado filmmaker Ronnie Cramer, whose previous credits include the critically acclaimed crime drama *Back Street Jane*.

In *Hitler*, Andren Scott plays the part of a 30-year-old security guard whose social life consists of looking at pornography, then having call girls come over to his house for expensive and degrading sexual encounters. His attempts at normal dates prove equally disastrous, so Marcus tries a number of ways to improve himself, including buying a corset to make himself look slimmer and studying self-hypnosis to help correct his mental outlook. Other cast members include Sheila Ivy Traister and Monica McFarland. Traister plays a crime reporter describing the scene of a multiple murder, while McFarland appears as a foul-mouthed prostitute whom Marcus secretly videotapes.

Other cameo performers include body builder Cindy Radliff, Emmy Award winning

TV producer Jean Wolf (*Kid Bits*), Karen Burns, dancer for the Nashville Ballet Company, and Rohnda Boshau, Winner of the 1990 *Playboy* magazine talent search, who was dismissed after refusing to sign an exclusive, five-year "non-nudity" agreement. Says Boshau, "They wanted five years of my life for a lousy \$10,000 prize. I make that much in a few months dancing part time!"



Karen Pombo plays a sympathetic call girl in the film *Even Hitler Had A Girlfriend*.

Even Hitler Had A Girlfriend was shot in Omaha, Denver, and rural South Dakota, from an original story called "Born To Lose" written by David Manning and T. G. Baker. The film's musical score was provided by Alarming Trends, a rock group founded by director Ronnie Cramer, who plays guitar in the band. Trends vocalist Rebecca Watson also makes an appearance in the film, playing one of the many women with whom our hero strikes out.

More news! **Rudolph Gray** can relax. His book length tribute to **Edward D. Wood, Jr.** was published in March, and the results were worth waiting for. *Nightmare Of Ecstasy*, the fruition of 10 years work, is a handsome volume, a good read, and something fans have been long awaiting.

If the *Nightmare* reader expects a point of view or a final summation of the life and work of Ed Wood, he may be surprised to find that author Gray has offered none. Gray's professed obsession with his chosen subject may be tainted by a sense of disdain & condescension; a need to distance himself from the darker, shameful aspects of the saga of Ed Wood. Therefore, the main body of the text is actually a discontinuous chronicle of quotations from actors, writers, friends — the people who knew, lived and worked the Ed Wood story as it unfolded.

Most biographies — auto or otherwise —

have some kind of tone about them. As the reader turns the pages he is getting a (usually) chronological picture of the subject as seen through the vision of the writer. In *Nightmare Of Ecstasy* this kind of guided tour through the life at hand is absent. Does Rudolph Gray actually enjoy the films of Ed Wood? Does he like Wood? If Wood, Criswell, Bela Lugosi, and Tor Johnson were alive today, would Rudy deign to be seen in public with them? Would he help them out as they helped each other during their years together?

One could ask questions like these all night long, and wait just as long for a reply. Admitting nothing, Rudy is entirely absent from the subject of his great work. Instead we learn what John Andrews, Vampira, Conrad Brooks, Kathy Wood, Paul Marco, John Agar, and many others are willing to admit to. They were there, in various degrees of involvement, and their assembled recollections tell their own tales, revealing/concealing as the life of Ed Wood unspools noncommittally before the reader's eyes. This pastiche of interwoven comments & confessions evokes an aura of Pleasures Past. Of Bay Rum, cheap perfume, haunted theatres, shady deals, Glamour Gone Sour, and fleabag apartments a mere block away from the glory of Hollywood Boulevard.

How an exploitation filmmaker was repeatedly exploited. This is (a scene from) *The Ed Wood Story*. Our ostensible author of the bio emerges from these shadows but rarely. His presence can be detected in the selection and arrangement of the quotations, his brief introduction, and in the photocaptions presumably written by Rudy. When he is heard from at all, he seems uneasy with his material, and a bit aloof. He's the only writer of recent memory who's cared to come out and call a spade a spade, rise manfully to the occasion by declaring Ed Wood to be a pornographer — a term which even the best minds in our federal courts have been unable to define. We don't have to define it; we just know it when we see it. Or to take a cue from a book Wood wrote, "It takes one to know one."

Actually, the most valuable aspect of *Nightmare Of Ecstasy* may well be the 21 page bibliography detailing the adult novels written by Ed Wood between 1963 and his death in 1978. The hitherto undocumented body of work is brought to life with titles, dates, excerpts, and provocative book-cover reproductions. The author obviously immersed himself in detailing this check list of nearly 60 novels, and over 20 short stories for the adult market. In this era, following a decade of the proliferation of hardcore sex videotapes for home consumption, these spicely Ed Wood novels seem relics of an innocent age. Still, you'll be hooked on reading about them, even if the books themselves may have been incomprehensible.

Nightmare Of Ecstasy is available from Feral House Publications in Los Angeles.

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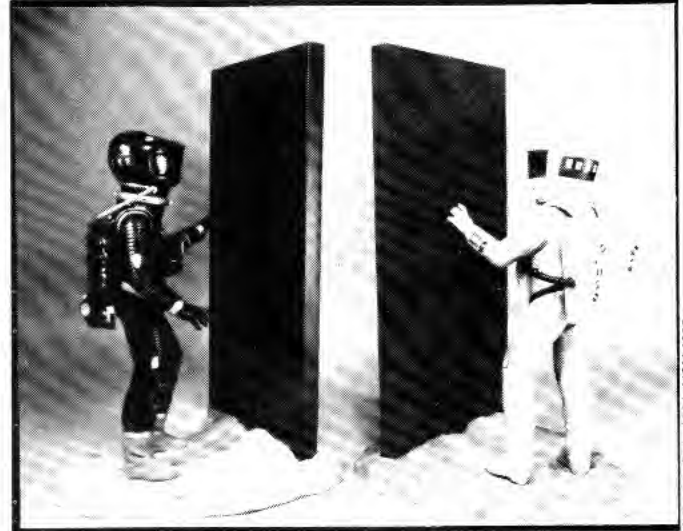
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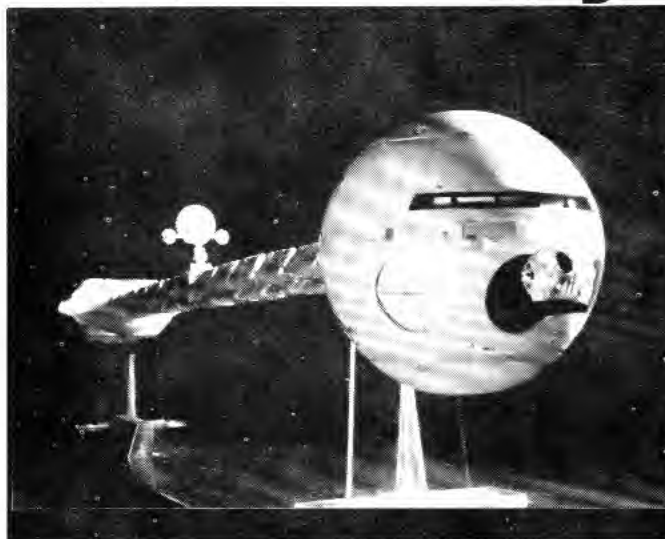


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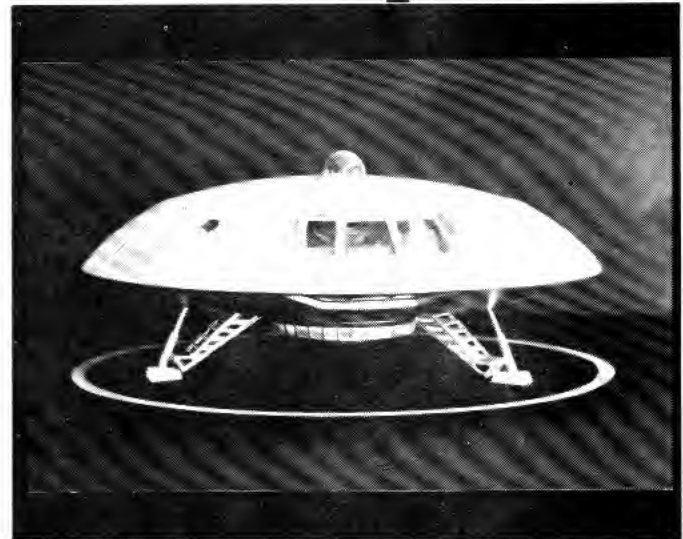
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